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VOL. V. (NEW SERIES) NO. 30. APRIL, '98.

London: F. V. WHITE & CO., 14, Bedford Street, Strand.

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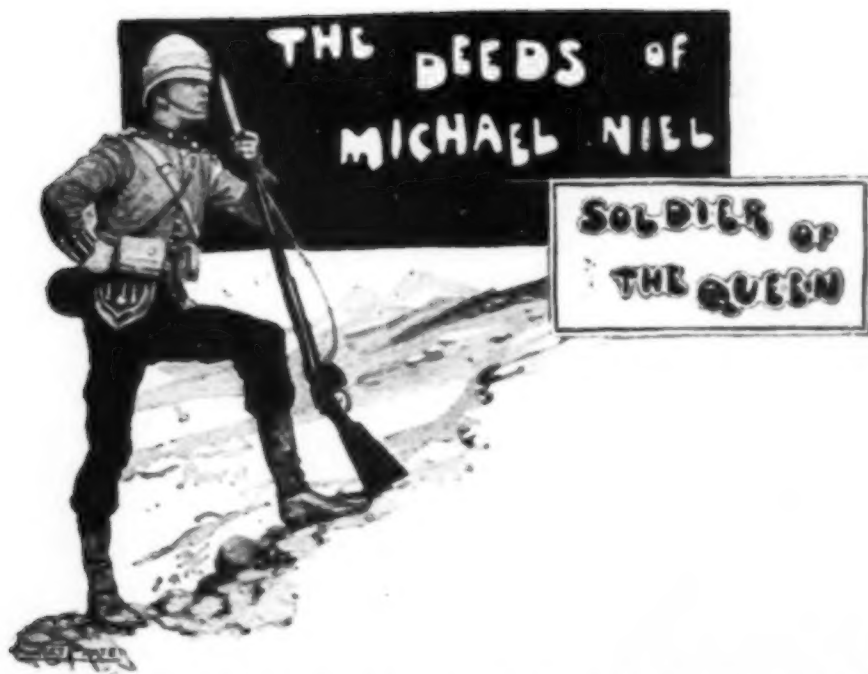
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CURED.



"I CAUGHT HIM BY THE COLLAR AND WRENCHED HIS
BUGLE FROM HIM"



WRITTEN BY F. NORREYS CONNELL. ILLUSTRATED BY ERNEST PRATER

VI.—THE PHANTOM OFFICER

WHEN His Excellency the Most Noble Marquess of Lisdoonvarna, K.P., Governor-General of India, in durbar at Simla assembled, declared war in the name of the Queen-Empress upon the King of Gonda, I was a captain of eight months' service.

Gonda is the shadow of a great Asiatic state, now parcelled out into "spheres of influence." Abandoned by the mainland in some forgotten hour of terrestrial convulsion, it lies, the greatest island in the world after Australia, asleep in the Indian Ocean.

Scattered along its immense coastline are many tolerably secure havens and ports; so many, indeed, that almost every power except the endemic government possesses one. Notably there are German, French, Portuguese, Dutch and Russian Gondas, all fortified and waited on by cruisers, and there are two British Gondas looking north-east and south-west. Also China has been for five hundred years suzerain of the island, a right to which more recently Japan has laid claim. Hence it can be understood that big as is the island of Gonda, there

is hardly room enough for all these spheres of influence, and it was the disinclination of the King to be elbowed any closer by those whom he regarded as visitors that led to the declaration of hostilities by the Marquess of Lisdoonvarna; the immediate *casus belli* being an indiscretion concerning a missionary who did not return from Gonda, and whose ultimate fate yet remains in doubt, although, whatsoever it may have been, it increased the British Empire by some twenty thousand square miles.

England had not gained her earliest foothold in the island without fighting for it. Her first expedition, made in the time of Sir Eyre Coote, ended in disaster. Opening her second far back in the 'Forties, with forces unequal to the task they were sent to do, she lost the first battle and it cost her eight years' flow of blood and treasure ere things came straight again.

This time she took a wiser course, and although busy at once in all the four corners of the world, worked hard until she had found forty thousand men to plant in Gonda, and of these nearly a third were Europeans. The Border

Light Infantry, brigaded with a battalion of the Royal Rifle Corps and a Madrassee regiment, were part of the division under General Ribblewood which, covered by the great guns of the warships in the offing, led the way ashore.

I have said I had my company when war broke out, but I did not command such men as followed Trafford into action down the glacis of Fort Dufferin. The morale of the whole corps had deteriorated since that time. Our Colonel, albeit a smart officer, had worked mainly on staff billets, and had never possessed himself of the regimental spirit. Destrée, too, Earl's successor in the adjutancy, was incapable of keeping up the standard that remarkable soldier had set, and for the rest had little to recommend him beyond an almost excessive good nature. With an unsympathetic commanding officer and a slack adjutant things were bad at best, and it only remained for the drafts of recruits supplying disease wastage to turn out unusually poor for the whole of the mess to look dismal. There was a feeling among us that the cholera itself was preferable to the dry rot which it left behind.

During the disembarkation the enemy's feeble opposition did not cost us a man, except for a boat upsetting through the nervousness of its occupants under fire, and dropping a jumpy lance-corporal to the bottom of the sea.

As party after party found their land legs and formed on the beach, the enemy discreetly withdrew towards a range of hills lying well back from the marshy terrene by the shore, where their shells, all percussion and not time-fused, failed to explode.

The transports bearing the cavalry and artillery were still at sea, so we did not attempt pursuit, pitching our camp on the first firm ground by the seashore, and still overshadowed by the cannon of our fleet.

In the morning, the second convoy of transports made the anchorage, and our horse and guns having been sent ashore in Masula surf boats, the Divisional General joined us, and we were ordered to break ground towards the enemy.

So far we had seen little of the foe, who had only bowled at us from Krupp guns, not particularly well-handled. The few figures our glasses smote into individuality were dingily-accounted cavaliers, half Cossack, half Tartar, mounted on undersized cattle. It was hard to believe that these paltry-looking horsemen had ridden over and chased a British regiment within living memory, and not twenty miles from our present camp; but such was the case, and the Commander-in-Chief of the present expedition, Sir Cholmondely Walsh, had been present at the engagement as a sixteen-year-old ensign of the broken regiment.

Our advance towards the enemy was mainly prompted by the necessity of occupying in some strength the whole area required for the large fortified camp mapped out by the Staff as our base of operations during the coming campaign. The first shovelful of damp earth which the sappers of our division turned that day has since grown into the bastion of St. Andrew, guarding British South Gonda from the landward.

We met with no opposition as we advanced to where some five miles from the sea the hills begin perceptibly to arise. Here the General halted us, and trotted on with only his staff and two squadrons of Bengal Lancers as escort.

As we stood, our regiment was in advance, with the Rifles on our right shouldering off that flank, and the Madrassees thrown out as a guard over the sappers, whose officers, theodolite in hand, had already started work on our left. Half a troop of the Bengalees was dropped in front of us by the General, and we could mark the gay flutter of their pennons about a mile up the hill.

His leaving behind any detail of his scanty force showed that Ribblewood anticipated little danger from this reconnaissance, and not an enemy being anywhere in sight, we shared his confidence. The horsemen on the hill dismounted.

Ranks were broken and arms piled by all except one company, which was detached to supply pickets and sentries. Some biscuit was served out, and was

engaging the men's attention, when the rattle of small-arm firing was distinctly heard, although at some distance. This noise continued spasmodically for some time, but we thought little of it until a sentry reported that the cavalry within

enemy when they should expose themselves.

We watched impatiently while the flying squadrons came nearer and nearer, the hoofs thundering mournfully over sand and shingle.



sight were getting in their saddles. On this we re-formed our ranks and prepared to advance or withdraw as occasion might require.

Suddenly we saw, what I have never seen before or since, a flight of panic-stricken horsemen.

The two squadrons of Bengal Lancers were galloping back in rout and disorder upon the position we had taken up. With my glass I could see the officers vainly striving to stay the men. One, an aide-de-camp by his scarlet tunic, was ridden over in the panic terror. We all prepared for immediate action, and the supporting sabres, under that splendid fellow, Withers Thompson, who afterwards broke his neck in the hunting-field, although such a mere handful, trotted off on the flank and gallantly made ready to charge the pursuing

"GALLOPING BACK IN ROUT AND DISORDER"

We saw Thompson wave his sword and dart off with his troopers. Then, to our amazement, we beheld him incline to his right and pull up. As he did so the pace of the driven horsemen visibly diminished. Their officers, two at least we could see, seemed to be stopping them at last. Wheeling out from their

centre they spread in distorted lines, and through the gaps in their ranks we thought to see the Gondese scimitars cleave a way.

We rubbed our eyes. There was not a fighting man within sight but owed allegiance to Victoria of Great Britain and Ireland.

Up to our Colonel galloped General Ribblewood, flustered and furious.

"Fire on the swine," he gasped. "Fire on them, fire on them."

But, fortunately, the chief had the sense not to obey. It was insane terror, and no timid cowardice that had taken the Bengalees, and already as they wheeled up and re-formed behind us, we read astonishment and shame upon their bearded countenances.

No one seemed clearly to understand what had occurred. It would appear that some distance inland they had seen the smoke of a Gondese farmhouse, and approaching it found it to be occupied by an outpost of the enemy, which General Ribblewood thought of trying to capture for the sake of information. Accordingly he dismounted a troop, and sent them to work round the rear of the position with directions to fling themselves noisily on the building and seek to frighten the defenders out of it, so that his mounted men might have a chance of catching a few alive as they fled.

The plan went very well up to a certain point: the alarmed Gondese burst out from their shelter just as Ribblewood calculated, but apparently in greater numbers than he had prepared to meet. Finding themselves opposed only by horsemen, and horsemen at rest, the Gondese had gone for them with their bayonets, and a fantastic, sanguinary scuffle had ensued which might have ended in the annihilation of the troopers had not their dismounted comrades created a diversion with their carbines. The Gondese now lost their advantage and fell back upon the farmhouse, which the troopers fought furiously to prevent them regaining, and with some prospect of success, until, quite unexpectedly, was heard the order to retire. There was a momentary check, but the

men's blood was hot, and they were going forward once more when the command was distinctly heard again, uttered in imperative tones. Undecided what to do, the troopers gave way. The Gondese rushed down on them, and in spite of their leaders, English or Indian, the cowed Lancers made for their horses and fled in confusion, leaving their dead and wounded on the field. No officer, least of all the General, acknowledged having given the order to retire, but that someone had done so all were agreed.

"Between ourselves," said a Lancer officer to me, "I'm afraid it was young Brian O'Dowd. There was something wrong with him the whole day. And whoever gave the order called it in three syllables—'Retiyur, retiyur!' I heard it myself—as Irish as you please."

"That's a lie," groaned Michael Niel; "I alone heard him."

Lord Brian O'Dowd was the staff officer whom the Lancers had ridden down in their flight. A party was sent out to bring him in, but a horse's hoof had crushed in his skull, and all he could say for himself was "God ha' mercy." He died as he was carried back to camp.

Howsoever brought about, this unfortunate encounter had an evil effect on the spirit of the expedition. Absurd rumours grew up concerning the supposed magic wiles of the enemy, and the Indian troops were undeniably impressed by the mysterious incident, particularly the cavalry.

The enemy, in the other scale, appeared to draw no great encouragement from their success, and although we lay inactive while the bulk of the expeditionary force was landed, no counter-stroke was attempted. For all we saw of its inhabitants the island of Gonda was a desert.

Several days passed, and we were reviewed more than once by Sir Cholmondely in person before there came the final order to advance. The cavalry trotted off soon after dawn to cover our march, and I noticed that the General had so arranged that the most forward squadrons should be European. The country, as far as one could see, was

fairly open, and we moved in line of battle; as on the day of the reconnaissance my regiment was about the centre of the first line, the Madrassesees and the Rifles in echelon on either flank, and covering them some Hussars with two sections of a battery of Horse Artillery.

A long way behind us marched the second line, the Cameron Highlanders in the centre, a Punjaabee regiment on their left and the Welsh Fusiliers on the right; behind them two batteries of Field Artillery. Besides these, General Champion's division, including a battalion of Grenadier Guards and the Connaught Rangers, were also taking the field, but apparently on a different objective, as, after an hour's march, they increased the interval between us until their line of direction formed a not very acute angle with ours.

We halted for the hot hours of noon, and it was not until, these past, the advance was on the point of resumption, that the presence of the enemy was reported. We gathered that the cavalry had found the farmhouse strongly occupied, and the Gondese in force no great distance beyond.

The horse-gunners lobbed a damaging shell into the farmhouse, and another round or two making it untenable, its defenders skedaddled without argument. The cavalry, however, reported that the enemy were coming up apparently to fill positions previously marked out, so methodical were their movements. Sir Cholmondely Walsh was not to be seen, but Ribblewood, galloping forward a moment to see how things lay, ordered a rapid advance of the rifles and ourselves, the former to incline somewhat to the right, the direction some of the horse and light guns were also taking, while we went straight ahead to occupy the farm buildings some seven furlongs in our front. The Madrassesees were halted, a troop of cavalry protecting the flank exposed by the forward movement.

I noticed no artillery in support, although I have heard it constantly asserted that there were two guns detailed for the work. What became of

them I cannot tell. The few projectiles that came within my purview were fired obliquely from the right, where the other artillery were engaged in support of the rifles.

We were within half a mile of the farm buildings when the main body of the enemy came in sight. There appeared to be a very great number of them, and they moved with a precision which, if too rigid for modern war, was yet admirable and inspiring. French uniforms, Prussian drill; the trail of the European militarist was over it all. As they approached, some fold of the ground hid them from view, and none emerged again save a force of some three thousand men, moving to reoccupy the farm buildings, on which our guns had ceased to play. This force was supported by artillery, which halted and unlimbered a couple of thousand yards away, holding its fire, however, until we were breasting a sort of grassy parapet lying between us and the farm; here a time-fused shrapnel burst over our heads to rain death on several of us, and more shells followed. It was clear that the enemy had marked the ranges about this point. With the ominous skeletons of the Bengal Lancers still encumbering the ground, we quickened our pace to reach the cover of the buildings.

We had hardly reached these when the artillery fire ceased, and the enemy's infantry came pouring in at the other side. They fought well with the bayonet, but in the confined space their numbers could not avail them, and driving them out Michael closed the doors upon them. We stood on the defensive until our supports should arrive. We had not long to wait, although cooped up within four walls, with the thunder of the unseen battle raging around us, the suspense was heavy. Soon Major Tilly, the senior officer present, had over three hundred men available, and as the enemy appeared to be abandoning this part of the field, he ordered a further advance, a thing which, strictly speaking, he ought not to have done, however opportune it seemed. Flinging open the doors, we swarmed out, and, without waiting for any elaborate formation, ran on up the hill.



"WE FOUND MICHAEL LYING WHERE
HE HAD FALLEN"

Suddenly, from God knows where, the enemy rose up, and set upon us. And this time they were no European drilled parade troops, but a multitude of fiery Asiatics, who carved us with knives. In our open order we were ill prepared for this attack, and we were hard put to hold fast in the *melée*, when I heard my own company bugler deliberately sounding the "retire."

I caught him by the collar and wrenched his bugle from him.

"You brat," I cried, "are you crazy? Who told you to do that?"

"A staff-officer on a horse, sir," he answered.

Knowing well that there was no staff or other mounted officer with us, I thrust him aside. But the mischief was done, and the other buglers had caught up the theme.

The men faltered, the enemy came on! It was a repetition of what the Lancer officer had seen. Panic seized the men, and they turned to fly. Three

of the officers died in the attempt to rally them.

Fortunately for me, my company having caught an echo of my speech with the bugler, held together round me. "Men," I said, "this is a terrible mistake. There was no order to retire."

"I heard it," protested one man. "And I," "And I," said others. "From an Irish officer," cried a voice.

"You're all liars!" shouted Michael. "There was no Irish officer."

"Yes there was: an Irish officer on a grey horse," declared my colour-sergeant, on whom, after Michael, I relied more than any one.

Order or no order, our position was critical, and I had no choice but to bring my men back to the farmhouse as quickly as I could without scampering. The retrogression cost us a couple of men, but we reached cover in some sort of formation, a feat to which none of the other companies were equal. Many individuals had quitted the field altogether, and those that had been turned back were broken and dispirited. The Colonel, who had arrived with the rest of the regiment, tried to pull the men together, and we were in hopes that as the Highlanders were seen approaching we might, stiffened by their backing, make another bid for victory. To our disgust, however, General Ribblewood, whose staff had been roughly handled by the enemy's cavalry, finding that he had lost touch with General Champion's division, ordered a withdrawal covered by the Camerons and a battery of artillery.

Sulkily we faced our men about and moved them off.

We had not gone far when Sir Cholmondely Walsh himself, with a single aide-de-camp tearing after him, spurred down on us.

"Where the blazes are you going?" he shouted.

"Running away, sir," answered our Colonel with bitter frankness.

"Well, do it with your head to the enemy, sir," retorted the General. "Right about turn! Steady there, you blackguards. Who sent you down here?"

"General Ribblewood, sir."

"Your divisional leader sent you scuttling off the field," bellowed Sir Cholmondely. "Drat the man, does he know that there's a German squadron in the bay!" Then Sir Cholmondely dropped off his horse and addressed us.

"Men of the Border Light Infantry," said he, "I've caught you running away, have I? Well, I've run off this identical

field myself fifty years ago, but I'm damned if I do it now, and I'm damned if I let you do it now. I'm told this position is defended by ghosts: upon my soul, I believe it is defended by ghosts. But if it's held by fiends from hell we've got to take it. So just you come along!" To cap the speech he flashed out his sword, and the somewhat transpontine trick did its work. We cheered him and advanced, he toddling in front of us on foot.

The Highlanders were still holding the farmhouse and the Madrassees were also moving in that direction, so we passed it on our left and came under the enemy's fire a hundred yards beyond.

Walsh's sword clattered to earth. "I'm hit," said he, "but I'm going on." Michael caught him in his arms and Walsh looked up at him. "Countryman of mine, carry me forward," said he. "I'm not bate, and I won't be bate."

He was a little man; Michael had him on his shoulder in a trice. The bullets were spattering round everywhere now, and he was hit again.

"Never mind," he cried; "they're giving us lead. We'll give them steel." He did not speak again, but shook his dying fist at the enemy's cavalry which now whirled down on us.

We formed only in double rank to meet them, Michael laying down his honoured burden to show a bayonet with the rest.

Suddenly a horseman galloped down our line, calling "Retiyur! retiyur! retiyur!"

Michael stared, the men quivered and grew pale. "He is Irish," he gasped.

A mad thought struck me. "Give that fellow a volley if he comes again," I said to my colour-sergeant. The words had not left my lips when the officer galloped up again. "Retiyur! retiyur! retiyur!" he cried. There was a rasp and rattle of musketry, but the horseman sped by unhurt, a piece of rope whisking behind from under his three-cornered hat.

Michael laid down his rifle, and fumbled under his tunic. "I'll cross it," he muttered, "if it comes again."

"Retiyur, retiyur, retiyur," we heard, and again the figure was before us. Michael flung himself in the way. "Get ye gone to your master!" he cried. The next instant phantom and man disappeared in the rush of the Gondese horsemen. But they never reached our line, for with a rumbling crash, the Border Light Infantry emptied their magazines into them at short range, and as the leading cavaliers bit the earth flinging those behind into confusion, Withers Thompson, with a single troop of the Bengalees, cleft through and through them.

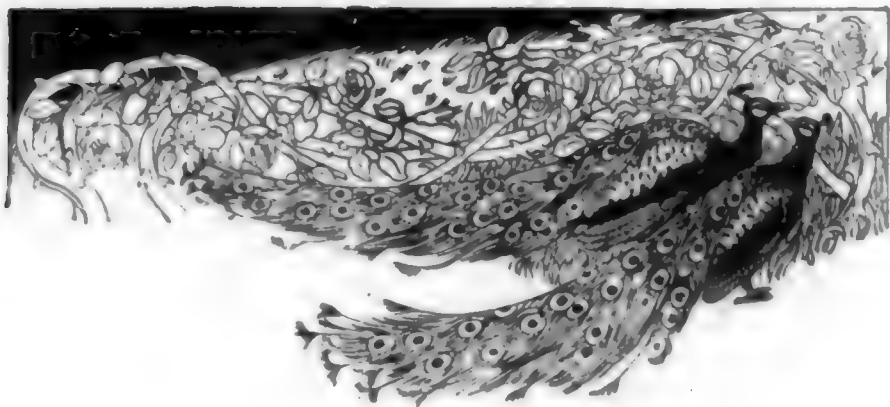
Almost simultaneously we heard the bellow of General Champion's guns on our right. And the field was won. It is unnecessary to say more; the details of the action, save what I have written here, are to be found in the official history.

We found Michael lying where he had fallen, stunned by a sword-cut. In his hand he held a fragment of that

statue of St. Patrick, the story of which has already been told.

I told this tale to Mr. Nicholson, expecting him to laugh me and it to scorn, but instead he took a volume of regimental records from his shelf and read me this extract: "During the expedition against the King of Gonda, 1774, Brian O'Dowd, titular Baron Thomond, serving on the staff of General Walker, was court-martialled and sentenced to death upon a charge of treasonable communication with the enemy. The sentence being irregularly carried out by hanging instead of shooting, an inquiry was held and incidentally the whole charge was disproved. General Walker had fallen in the campaign, but several of the surviving members of the court-martial were dismissed the service."

"That accounts for it," said Mr. Nicholson, in curiously matter-of-fact tones. "After the Hindoos, the Irish are the most mysterious people on earth. But I should like to see that fellow Niel."



A Celebrated Snake Savant:

DR. ARTHUR STRADLING, C.M.Z.S.

WRITTEN BY ANNESLEY KENEALY. ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOS



SENNY STRADLING AS
A SNAKE CHARMER
Photo by William Cole

URELY it would be difficult to find a more delightful diversion than a conversation with Dr. Arthur Stradling on snakes; for he

is not only a snake savant, learned in the science and natural history of the serpentine family, but is an adept in snake-lore and a student of the romantic superstitions which from prehistoric times have been associated with snakes.

Taking tea in his drawing-room at Watford in Hertfordshire is like picnicking in the tropics. Huge snakes—safely stuffed—look down from the walls with a cruel longing to crush assembled visitors in anything but an affectionate embrace; while weird lizards appear to watch with bright eager eyes the crumbs of cake which fall to the ground as though these were their special perquisites. Fairy, ghost-like moths poise aloft as if about to alight with soft touch on the prosaic flowers of civilised millinery—a poor substitute for their own tropical blossoms. And terrible, gigantic spiders seem waiting to sit down beside you with cannibal purpose. The room is lined with glass cases, wherein the “strange gods” worshipped in many lands are disposed side by side with bundles of snake-skins and foreign pottery. So that a patient “waiting for the Doctor” has many distractions from his own diagnosis.

This menagerie is the more interesting from the fact that all its constituent creatures were with Dr. Stradling “in the flesh,” for he has owned upwards of 3,000 live pets in the course of his career—counting, as he does, his cobras and rattlesnakes in the category of “pets.” His lover-like attitude to the “creeping tribe” generally, as well as his scientific interest in these, is a hobby inherited from his father. Many naturalists are keenly interested in snakes—Dr. Stradling has a rare, strong personal affection for them, and any cruelty practised towards a snake rouses his utmost indignation. In his school-days he underwent great tribulations in an endeavour to outwit a scholastic expulsion of all “live stock” from the possession of the pupils. Even as St. Patrick banished snakes and toads from Ireland, so the head-master sought to deprive budding naturalists of their pets. For a long time the young savant successfully baffled detection by keeping a favoured toad in his Sunday hat. The head-master, while barring a taste for natural history in his pupils, encouraged the cultivation of flowers, and several boys set up window-boxes. Young Stradling gleefully seized the opportunity, and, turning his toad into the roomy quarters of a window-garden, he covered him with a cardboard roof sprinkled with a thin layer of earth, in which he set some bulbs. Naturally, these never grew, and the box was known as “Stradling’s dustbin.” But the toad grew apace beneath the bulbs that failed, and was the joy of his owner’s heart, till a fateful thunderstorm, by removing the cardboard cover, divulged the happy hiding-place of the cherished creature.

Dr. Stradling is a charming lecturer, and frequently takes his snakes for an

evening with the learned and scientific, or to the Victoria Palace, where, to please the East-Enders, a popular science lecture is sandwiched in with a music-hall entertainment. Dr. Stradling and his serpents are adored by the White-chapellers, who never omit at the conclusion of these lectures to "call" for a particular python to which they are much attached, and who receives the ovation usually accorded to a star comedian or a burlesque brunette.

"Snakes," he says, "are troublesome travelling companions. But when going to a lecture I have taken long railway journeys with 150 of them, measuring from 16 feet down to 8 inches in length, in one leather trunk. It's surprising how many snakes you can pack into a Gladstone bag. I have sometimes shown a whole brood of baby snakes in a claret glass. It's no sine-cure, though, to travel with snakes during cold weather. For you have to sit up practically all night to keep in the fires—snakes being so sensitive and susceptible to cold that the least variation in temperature may kill them. I invariably 'stoke' for my own snakes, for I should not like to entrust the duty to somebody who might neglect the fire."

Dr. Stradling recalls many instances when he has been due to lecture on snakes in various provincial towns, and has been rejected at hotels by proprietors fearing reptilian escapes, and conjuring up visions of boa-constrictors on the stairs holding an hotel at bay, while cobras stalked the corridors triumphant and secure of a meal off the landlord's baby. Southampton is apparently most inimical to snakes, for here Dr. Stradling was boycotted by every

landlord in the town, until he was in danger of finding a lodging for himself—and a grave for his shivering snakes—on the cold ground. But a courageous confectioner of a scientific turn of mind took pity on him and his strange travelling companions, sheltered him hospitably, and saved both the situation and the lives of the chilly snakes.

So far, no snake of his has ever gone astray, save in the solitary instance of a small, harmless one which escaped from his overcoat pocket while in a London 'bus. "I never heard his fate," laments

Dr. Stradling, "but doubtless he caused much consternation among the other fares. I did not miss him till I reached home."

Dr. Stradling initiated the practice of "cramming snakes"—a method of bringing up by hand, which has been adopted at the Zoo. This is an essential practice, since many snakes in captivity refuse all food, and if not "crammed" would die of starvation. The snake, however, beats all the records of "fasting men," for several



A LIFE-LONG COMPANION
Photo by Frederick Downer

varieties of them can live for the space of two years with no inward or visible form of nutriment. To see a snake "crammed," as in the illustration, is intensely interesting.

"You can do anything with a snake in a bag," says Dr. Stradling in a matter-of-course tone. "First catch your snake, and then feed him," is the motto of this snake savant, who uses a domestic bolster-case while "cramming" the more obstreperous of his pets. The tamer ones he feeds in the manner shown in the illustration. "In the case of very bad-tempered snakes," he says, "I just turn a bolster-case inside out over my arm, make the snake seize the

lower end in his fangs, draw up my arm, and there I have my snake safe and manageable."

It sounds lovely and easy—as Dr. Stradling puts it. If the snake be not first put in a bag, it is necessary to keep the feet firmly pressed on his body to prevent him from "coiling." The selected food is placed at the back of the throat and pressed down the gullet by constricting fingers so that the huge snake, ignominiously imprisoned in a bolster-case, is forced very much against his will to swallow a square meal. Dr. Stradling's son Renny, a handsome boy inheriting much of his father's talent, has already, at the age of ten, become a most accomplished "snake crammer."

"There is an occasional outburst of popular sentiment against providing snakes with small live creatures for food," he says, "but there is absolutely no cruelty involved in the practice, for a snake kills a rat literally in a second—quicker than if the creature were struck by lightning. That popular superstition of the 'fascinated terror' which a snake inspires in its victim has absolutely no foundation. A pigeon contentedly pecks corn in the snake-case, up to the very moment the snake darts at it; and a rat—unless provided with a piece of meat—frequently begins to eat the snake for whose ultimate meal he is intended. Men and monkeys are the only creatures possessing natural instincts of terror at the proximity of snakes. I remember once when the late Lord Lil-

ford took some snakes from his bag when in the monkey-house at the Zoo, all the monkeys exhibited the utmost chattering terror—a terror which lasted for many days after the occurrence.

"The 'rare intelligence' of snakes is another popular delusion. One instance



IN THE HANDS OF THE CHARMER

Photo by Frederick Downer

of the crass stupidity of an anaconda may serve as typical of their mental deficiency. Whilst serving as sea-going surgeon in the Royal Mail, I was on one occasion bringing home an anaconda among a collection of lively zoological specimens. In my cabin was a rare tropical bird in a reed cage. During a temporary absence the anaconda emerged from his box, crushed this cage

to atoms, and was on the point of swallowing both cage and bird when I came on the scene, and gently persuaded him that the meal might prove indigestible!

"Another day I returned to find a



A SERPENTINE CIRCLE

Photo by Frederick Downer

brood of rattlesnakes had hatched out before the calculated time, and my cabin swarming with these little black venomous reptiles. I captured about forty of them, but the rest of the voyage proved most disquieting, for I never knew how many had really hatched out, and was always dreading that some of them might turn up in other quarters of the ship."

Dr. Stradling makes some amusing strictures on the snake of the novelist.

"Snakes," he says, "have come marvellously to the fore in fiction, and their remarkable habits in novels cause much entertainment to the naturalist. In a current popular story a snake is igno-

rantly made the instrument of homicide in the hands of an individual who thus easily disposes of his enemies. One of these, sleeping peacefully in bed, dies mysteriously. No perceptible mark or suggestive evidence is found. Another

man is lured to the same bed and meets a similar fate—and so on to the end of the chapter of enemies. Now, the bite of a snake is as obvious as the track of a bullet, added to which are the unmistakable local and constitutional symptoms, so that this kind of murder by proxy would easily be discovered."

Dr. Stradling was the first to establish the theory of immunity by means of inoculation. He has been bitten three hundred and fifty times by various snakes, having previously prepared and treated himself for the ordeal by carefully graduated inoculations of snake venom. His arms are scarred from shoulder to wrist with snake bites—the wounds caused by fangs of varying size and kind standing out clear and defined after a lapse of many years. For he no longer exposes his limbs to venomous attack—in the cause of science. "When I gave up bachelordom and settled down to general practice," he explains, "I had to give up personal experiments in snake bite. But the theory of compara-

tive immunity after venom inoculation was fairly established by personal test, proof and demonstration on the present *corpus*, twenty years and more before Calmette, Fraser, Giogli and others claimed the credit attaching thereunto by virtue of their bacteriological attainments and battues of guinea-pigs. But my bites and syringe-stabs were received in the gloom of a relative unknowing, at a period unilluminated by the later lights of the pertinent 'ologies. In my case, the microbe formed no factor in the reckoning, and what to me was simple dilution now becomes the dominant process of 'cultivation.' Now, however, the hypodermically-injected rat, rabbit,

or guinea-pig is offered on the altar of Science in the odour of the uttermost tribute of terminology that type can impart to paper, and canonised by votive articles in the medical journals, admirably adapted for quotation by the 'lay' press."

In the early years of his career he had a unique experience while taking medical charge of 3,000 Apahuais in Nicaragua. For a year and a-half he accompanied these red men on their rubber-tree cutting expeditions, going through malarial and horrible jungles, where probably no white man had ever before been. Here his opportunities for studying snakes were unequalled, since anacondas and huge serpents of every variety throng in the luxuriant and damp jungles of this part of Central America. "Candle-boxes and coils of galvanised wire represented my only naturalist stock-in-trade, but I managed to get some glorious snakes." The red men, grateful for his medical ministrations against malaria, initiated him into their medicine craft, though they would hardly credit that the "great snake man" was not already indoctrinated, since snakes form a leading feature of the cult.

"I never reached the last stage of initiation, for I drew the line at the terrible state of intoxication by tobacco and aguardiente which is necessary to complete a knowledge of the mysteries. During this last stage the soul is held to leave the body and learn the secrets of the higher initiation. On a tree-cutting expedition I was attacked by a severe form of malaria, and remained delirious

for six weeks, during which the red men behaved with great kindness and devotion. Their strict code of honour was shown by the scrupulous way in which they guarded my store of quinine—a very real temptation to men living in so malarial a district. And they not only convoyed me to safe quarters, but they carefully transported my bag of snakes, which they had always both feared and hated."

As to snake-charmers, Dr. Stradling says: "The snake-charmers of the East belong to a special caste and develop great dexterity in the handling of snakes. The earliest Oriental travellers tell of the marvels of snake-charming, and their feats are pictured on prehistoric tombs and ancient sculptures.

"Snake-charmers commonly use cobras in their performances, largely because



A DEADLY EMBRACE

Photo by William Coles

the cobra when excited 'sits up' in a peculiar manner natural to the species. But this idiosyncrasy gives the charmer an opportunity for a pretence that they have been trained to assume this posture. Many charmers sew the lips of the cobra together with fine silk stitches so that they cannot use their fangs—a deception invisible save to the expert eye. Others remove the fangs, although this by no means insures those who handle them from a venomous wound, since poison is still secreted after the fangs are taken away. But most charmers entirely rely for protection on their adroit handling of the snakes."

Dr. Stradling throws some interesting light on the hooded snake. "The hoods of snakes were unquestionably intended by Nature

birds specially—seizes him when prostrate, and ripping up the back of the neck speedily dispatches him."

He tells an amusing story of a cobra putting his head into a biscuit tin in search of a mouse regaling itself on macaroons. The rough sides of the tin irritated the cobra so that he involuntarily dilated his hood, and was consequently unable to remove his head from his tin prison. Found next morning in this awkward predicament he was safely and quickly dispatched.

The story of snake-worship, both ancient and modern, and the superstitions as to the inherent wisdom of the venomous tribe generally, as told by Dr. Stradling, is a story full of enchantment and interest.

"The natives of India are firmly con-



CONGENIAL COMPANY

to act as weapons of intimidation, for when suddenly opened, as they are during the excitement of a contest, these give their owners an apparent and formidable enlargement. But the hoods which have been so useful at some period in snake history, have now become so enlarged as to tend towards the extinction of their owners, just as the overdevelopment in the tusks of prehistoric animals led straight to their destruction. During a fight the hooded snake in the act of striking his foe suffers from the outstretched and weighty hood—he overbalances himself and topples forward. His assailant—the mongoose and some

vinced that a snake loses one joint for every human being bitten. When the number of deaths he has caused equals the number of his joints, the venomous head alone remains. He has now reached the Mecca of his wicked desire, and at this point develops wings and triumphantly disappears.

"An exception to this rule is met with on the other side of the world in the case of the rattlesnake, of whom the natives aver that he gains a thimble for every man he kills. Carefully counting these they claim to calculate with mathematical precision the number of humans a particular rattlesnake has sacrificed.

"In Central America the natives believe a rattlesnake has such keen sympathy with original sin that he invariably refrains from attacking or injuring an unfaithful wife. Her crime exempts her from his sting. The practical application of this test places the lady to whom suspicion attaches in an awkward situation. The Indian snakes are so confirmed in atheism and wickedness that they exhibit no alarm when the name of the King of birds is uttered in their presence—a name which strikes terror into all other living creatures. Indeed, the snake alone of the animal family cynically and contemptuously regards anybody who attempts to frighten him by such a cheap device.

"The natives of Central America assert that the 'aura' of a dying person is particularly attractive to all varieties of snakes, and that the presence in the house of a person *in extremis* attracts all the serpents of a neighbourhood—a drop of blood from an individual at the point of death being the heart's desire of every well-regulated snake.

"This creature," pointing to a ferocious spider in a glass case, "was the first specimen of his kind brought from South America to the Zoo. As I was the first to introduce him he was christened *Homonoma stradlingi*. He shares the epicurean tastes of the ancient Romans.

They regarded the brain of a nightingale as a most desirable table dainty. This species of spider lives only for the joy of regaling himself with the brains of the white mouse." The toad shown in the engraving was a life-long companion of Dr. Stradling, and has only recently shuffled off this mortal coil. His was a delightful personality, the only drawback to his perfect enjoyment of life being a confirmed dyspepsia. For several years Dr. Stradling mitigated his pains by feeding him only on food previously soaked in snake-venom, which he has discovered possesses very valuable pre-digestive qualities. "No chemical experiments or analyses have revealed any other quality in the venom than that of saliva, so that most probably its primary function is that of a purely digestive fluid—though nobody can doubt its deadly ammunitional value."

From snake to spider, and from toad to digestion, Dr. Stradling is so absorbingly interesting, that the interviewer entirely forgot that he is not only a great naturalist, but a very busy practitioner. It was impossible longer to disregard the many calls on his time, and the writer reluctantly passed from the tropical setting of live rattlesnakes and cobras, and a panorama of glistening venomous eyes, on to the prosaic pavement of a provincial town.



By

J. A. FLYNN



ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES M. SHELDON



HE doctors said that the crisis would come about midnight. At eight I put on my hat and went half-way to the house before I turned back. At nine I walked as far as the square and watched the blinds from afar. At ten I returned to my rooms and cast my arms upon the table and my head upon my arms. At the eleventh hour I knocked at the door of the house where Geoffrey Dane lay struggling with death—Geoffrey Dane who held my secret.

It was Margaret Dane who answered the soft, muffled rap—sunny-haired Margaret, *my* Margaret. She said nothing; only put her finger to her lips and looked at me with sad, dry eyes, and took my hand to lead me into the library. First her look meant that she had recognised the knock; next it meant that I had been long in coming; then it meant that the turning-point was near. For between us there was little need of words.

"Well," I whispered at last, because I must say something; "Well—my dear?"

"O, Harry!" she cried in a piteous undertone; "you do believe there is hope?"

I brushed a place on the table for my

hat and set it down. It was strange to see the room fireless and dusty.

"Surely," I answered, "surely, dear, there is hope." There was the hope of life—or death!

We stood awhile by the bare fireplace with one elbow each upon the mantelpiece, and the fingers of our other hands interlocked.

"You cannot realise," she whispered in a voice passionate with restraint, "how much it means to me."

I tried to say something, but the words stopped in my throat, and there came only an inarticulate sound.

"You are so tender-hearted, dear," she went on. Her eyes began to soften into tears.

"Don't!" I cried, pressing her fingers a little tighter. She nodded, and paused for a moment to recover herself.

"Do you know, Harry, I had been foolish enough to think that you two did not care very much for each other—were not *interested* in one another, I mean."

"Dear, you were wrong," I shuddered.

"Yes, yes!" she cried, "I am learning to know you better; my strong, kind——"

"Lover," I said, earnestly, putting my other hand out on the mantelpiece to hers. Should I ever hold it again after to-night? The clock on the mantel ticked out the answer. If he die—if he



"WE STOOD AWHILE BY THE BARE FIREPLACE"

die! We stood silent for a long time. Every few minutes she quivered at the mouth, and I pressed her hand; and the ticking of the clock seemed to grow louder and louder, till at last I turned it sharply sideways to stop the pendulum.

"I cannot bear it," I said, with a nervous laugh; and she nodded and quivered a little more.

"He has been so good to me, always so very good to me, Harry."

"Yes," I said, "I know."

"He stinted himself to keep me at school when I was a little girl, and he was working—working so hard in Australia."

"Yes, dear," I said again; "I know."

"He used to tell me that my portrait in a little locket, which I bought out of my pocket-money, was his chief comfort all through those hard times." She looked down on the ground, and I saw her bosom heave and swell.

"My poor little Margaret," I answered; "I know."

Yes, I knew. My memory went back to a summer night, when he and I smoked our pipes at the door of a little Australian hut, whilst the full moon sailed over the young corn as if it were a sea of waving, rippling green. For an hour we said nothing, and there was no sound but the splash of the little stream over the little fall, and the rare barking of the dogs. The moon crept further and further round the hut until he sat like a statue in the light; his shadow lay along the ground, just below my feet. At last he heaved a great sigh at his thoughts, and he talked to me of home and the little sister there, and showed me the sweet face in the locket. Many a time afterwards I begged a look.

"I have wondered so often," she went on in a voice of artificial calm, "if there was anything that I could do to make his life bright, as he made mine."

"You have done much, Margaret." She shook her head.

"I used to think so, dear, sometimes, but I know now how little I can do—since—since——" My hands went chilly with fear of what she might say.

"Since when?" I said, hoarsely.

"Since I found out what love was, my dear," said she, lifting up her face with a tender smile. "Since you taught me that there was happiness beyond a brother's or sister's gift!"

I bent over her hand upon the mantelpiece and kissed it with the passion of despair. If he should take her from me—if he should live!

"I have learnt this also from you," I told her, seeing that she paused.

"Since then," she continued, thought-

fully, "I have felt that there was happiness which I could not give——"

"Except to me, Maggie."

"Except to you, dear. I have learnt from many and many a little sign that there was something missing from his life. I have known that there must be a bitter secret in his past. Haven't you noticed, too, Harry? Don't you think there was?"

"Yes," I replied, huskily. "Yes, my dear, I think there was."

I remembered how he told me that night of his early life in Australia, before we met, and of the woman whom he loved—a woman bright as a poppy and light as flame. I knew the woman. Soon he found out that she was mixed up with a gang of ill-repute. He turned his face away from the light as he told me how he pleaded with her till she promised to break with them. But before she had done so a fracas arose one night in a low saloon between the gang and a body of loafers nearly as bad as themselves. The lights were put out, revolvers were fired, and the woman died—shot through the gold locket which he had given her, and through her heart. Whether by accident or design, he said, no one knew. I moved a little further into the shadow, for I knew. It was by accident, I tell you! I fired at her accomplice, who had ruined me, and whose bullet in my shoulder spoilt my aim.

"I was not sure till the other day," Margaret went on, sadly, "when I found him seated at the table here." She waved her hand to the place. "I can see him now!" She paused chokingly.

"So," I said, "can I."

"He had a broken gold locket—that pale Australian gold, you know—before him, and a lock of hair, and a bullet, and two or three odds and ends; I scarcely remember what. He looked up at me so fiercely that I hardly knew him. O, Harry, you can't imagine how he looked!"

I dug my nails into my palms, until I flushed with pain.

"I think," I said, "I can."

"I put my hand on his shoulder, and said, 'Geoffrey, dear, tell me.' But he

pushed me aside almost roughly. Then he recovered himself, and tried to smile. O, Harry, it was a terrible smile."

I gripped the mantelpiece furiously.

"Yes," I said. "Yes."

"I began to ask him again, but he put out his hand gently—he *was* so good to me always"—I bowed my head in assent—"and just said 'don't.' I wouldn't have said a word more, indeed I wouldn't; but there was a bright-looking revolver on the corner of the table—one of those things with lots of chambers. You know what I mean?"

"Yes, dear," I said quietly. "I know what you mean." There was one in my coat pocket now.

"I just touched it, and said, 'O, Geoffrey, *this?*' Then he gathered all the things up and put them into a case, and said, 'My child, these are my reminders of a great wrong; and perhaps the clues to the wrong-doer. Do not ask me any more.'"

"And you refrained?"

"No, not quite. But he told me nothing more. Poor, *poor* fellow! O, Harry, don't you pity him, whilst you and I are happy together?"

I seemed to hear the echo of the stopped clock ticking, "If he dies! if he dies!" But I answered her calmly.

"Yes, my little girl," I told her, "indeed I do—whilst you and I are happy together."

Then I thought of another night, when he and I faced one another with our fingers on our triggers and the overturned table between us, and of the hot words that we said. "Now I know that you were one of those cowardly ruffians I would shoot you like a dog," he shouted, "but——" "We were no cowards," I answered. "We were cheated and ruined and outnumbered two to one. I am no coward, partner. Try me now, if you will." Had I been a coward I had shot him then, for I was the quicker of hand and eye. "No," said he after a few moments. "Go your way and I will go mine. I am waiting till I find the man who slew *her*. I waste no shot till then. Bring me face to face with him and you may have my share of the farm." "I would not, if I knew," I told him. I

feared him not, but the thought of the innocent face in the locket tied my tongue. So we divided our property and parted without a shake of the hand. This was ten years ago. Now he threatened to part me from Margaret, who knew nothing of the past, and never should know—if he died!

"Do you know, Harry?" Margaret continued, "I have fancied sometimes that he did not care to see you, because you too have been in Australia and so reminded him of *it*."

"It?" I echoed.

"Whatever it was I mean. Did you—you won't be offended, dear?—ever notice a slight coldness in his manner to you?"

"Yes," I answered mechanically; "I have fancied that I noticed it."

"Just once in a way," she added soothingly, touching my hand upon the mantelpiece.

"Just once in a way," I assented.

Then there came a soft rap at the street door, followed by a subdued ring. "The doctor!" said she, pressing her hand to her side; "I will be back soon," and she went out. I stood motionless and dazed for a few minutes, till I heard them go upstairs. Then I sat down wearily in an arm-chair and tried to think, but could only remember.

It was in this very library that I had met him again, as his sister's accepted lover. In Australia we had gone by other names, and we had no reason to dream that we should meet that night. I stopped with my hand on the door-handle, when our eyes met, and he rose supporting himself by one hand on the table and the other on a chair, glowering at me like a wild animal. Then his face went cold and hard and he beckoned me to a chair.

"Well?" he asked sternly.

"Let bygones be bygones," I implored.

"I shall be good to your little girl."

He looked at me in silence for a minute.

"Tell me who did it," he demanded.

"I shall not."

"Then give up Margaret."

"I never will."

"If I tell her all I know of your past——"

"You will hurt her very much. But



"WHEN HE AND I FACED ONE ANOTHER WITH OUR FINGERS ON OUR TRIGGERS"

—I spoke with the boldness of knowledge—"she will marry me all the same." There was further silence for five minutes, ticked out by the clock.

"For Margaret's sake, then," he said at length, "we meet as if we had never met before. For Margaret's sake because the child loves you; and because you will be good to her."

"Before Heaven ——"

"Yes, yes! Do you think I would parley with you, if I had any doubt of *that*? But hear me, Henry Nugent. If ever I find that you were in any way connected with *her* death; if ever I find that you in any way planned it ——"

"I did not," I said.

"If ever I find that you saw it coming,

and would not stop it—I shall tell Margaret of that—aye, and of other things in your life.”

“Atoned for by ten years of hard work and good life,” I claimed.

“Atoned or unatoned, I shall tell her. And it will be my utmost effort to bring you within the arm of the law as a coward, and a murderer.”

“I am neither,” said I.

“I have in this house,” he went on, drumming the table with his fingers, “the bullet which killed her, and the revolver from which it was fired—an unusual make at that time and place. I have here several other clues, and I am spending some thousands of pounds to trace them to the end. For Margaret’s sake, may none of them tend in any way to incriminate you.”

“They will not,” I said. At the time I think he believed me. Anyhow, for months he tolerated my presence; shook hands with me when I came and went; was civil to me before people; agreed to a date for the wedding; and if our conversation was cold and formal, people knew that he was a reserved man, and noticed nothing strange.

Then, by some diabolical turn of events—perhaps through the associations recalled by my presence—the clues converged, and pointed to my hand as that which fired the shot. It was an accident, I swear, by all that’s holy.

He sent me a short, sharp summons to see him in the library, where I now sat. When I came he behaved like a madman. His face worked in every muscle, and the perspiration rolled down his forehead. His voice hissed like a serpent’s, his finger-tips rattled upon the table, and his limbs shook as he raved at me. I will not write down the words that he said. Had he been anyone but Margaret’s brother, I would have caught him by the throat, and strangled him as he stood.

The pith of what he said was this. The evidence he had gathered together, aided by the clues in his hands, was sufficient to prove that in the drunken, gambling fracas, twelve years ago, I had shot the woman. This, though an everyday occurrence in the wild mining settle-

ment, where people carried their lives in their hand, was manslaughter, if not murder, in the cold eyes of the English law. Moreover, there were episodes in my previous life which, though not legally punishable, would be worse than crimes to Margaret’s view. For her sake, he said, he gave me three days in which to leave her without explanation, or be handed over to the law and dishonoured in her eyes.

In vain I pleaded her love for me, and his for her.

“Do you think,” he shrieked, “that no one else has loved but you? Coward! murderer!”

I kept my hands off him still, because he was her brother; and I staggered out into the night, afraid to meet the eyes of men—I, who had atoned for my youthful follies by ten years of good and honest life.

Next morning there came a little pencilled note from Margaret—*my* Margaret—saying that her brother was stricken with brain-fever, and that at the third day the crisis would come, when he would recover or die.

It happened as they foretold. For three days he lay in the fever, tossing restlessly on his bed, and crying out incoherent things about Australia and a woman and Margaret and me, to which no one attached any serious meaning. For three days I went backwards and forwards to his house in an agony of suspense, and concealed my feelings under a calm, grave exterior. I drew my money from its investments, and carried it with me; and my bag was packed and waiting at Charing Cross station. Now the crisis had come, and I could do nothing, only sit and wonder whether he would live or die.

If he should live there was only one point to consider: whether I should fly alone or tell Margaret and take her with me. I knew she would come. In which way should I break her heart—my loving Margaret?

But there was the other chance: he might die! I pictured myself with Margaret, and children at our knees, growing slowly old in an honoured and useful life; with my business prospering

and my friends growing dearer as we aged together; with the past sinking deeper into the past, and hope always bright in the future—if he should die! My fingers played the words on the table, my feet tapped them on the floor, my life-blood throbbed them in my pulses, my watch ticked them in my pocket, the passers in the street walked to their rhythm: if he dies—if he dies!

I opened the window, my breath came in such stifling gasps; and afar a clock struck twelve. I gripped the back of a chair and clenched my teeth in my excitement. Still there was no sign—nothing but an occasional soft footfall in the room overhead, where Geoffrey Dane, my enemy, lay struggling with the fever.

It was about one o'clock when the door opened and Margaret came quietly into the room. I closed the window, seeing her shiver, and put my arm round her waist. I drew her shawl more closely round her with my other hand, and her head drooped wearily upon my shoulder.

"It will be some hours yet, the doctors say," she told me, "before they can tell if he will live."

"Or die," said my heart. But my lips said nothing.

"O, Harry, I do not know how to bear this suspense!"

"Nor I," I said huskily.

"It means *everything* to me—except you." To me it might mean even her.

We stood together awhile; then I stooped down in front of the empty grate and lit a little fire to warm her. She stood close beside me whilst I did so, and touched me now and then on the shoulder, as if she did not like me to be far away. Then we sat side by side on the sofa.

"It troubles me most of all," she said pitifully, "to think that he may not be at peace with everyone. Don't you think, Harry, that that is the most terrible thing of all?"

"It is a terrible thing," I answered.

"For I cannot help thinking that this is what the bullet and things mean. Do you not think so?"

"Yes, I think so." My lips twitched and she noticed.

"It need not trouble *you* so much," she murmured, "my kind dear! You mustn't let it."

"I cannot help it," I cried sharply. Then we were silent again.

"Perhaps we may be mistaken. Perhaps he has forgiven; or perhaps he would forgive—now. Let us hope so."

"Yes; we will hope so," I replied quietly. But I had no hope. Then there was another period of silence.

At last Margaret looked at me with big, solemn eyes. "Harry dear," she said, "let us pray—for my brother's life—that he may be spared—to us who love him!" A madman's cry almost escaped my lips, but I checked it. "Pray with me," she entreated. And we knelt side by side.

"O, God, spare my brother," she said, in her clear voice, "if it be Thy will."

"If it be Thy will," I repeated.

"And if it be Thy will that he should go"—her voice faltered—"let him first forgive his enemies."

"Forgive his enemies!" The words seemed forced from my lips.

"And leave us in peace."

"Leave us in peace," I echoed fervently.

We bowed our heads upon our hands, and again there was no sound. Whenever I looked up the tears were trickling through her fingers. At feverish intervals I prayed for happiness for her; but for him I prayed neither for life nor death. After a time we rose and sat side by side again, still keeping silence. It was nearly five o'clock when the nurse came to summon her upstairs.

"The turning-point will come within half an hour. Let us hope for the best——"

"But you fear?" asked Margaret.

"One can never tell," said she soothingly. "There is always hope of life. And sometimes there is hope also of death."

"Yes, yes," I said, "we will hope for the best."

"Will you not come?" asked Margaret wistfully, turning to me.

"Perhaps—I am afraid"—I looked appealingly at the nurse—"my presence might excite him, considering how he has talked of me."

"Yes, it might," said she coolly. "Come, my dear." She took Margaret's arm protectingly. I could see that she thought me a coward who feared to see death. How should she know the fear of life? So they went slowly out, and left me alone.

I walked to the window, and pulled up the blind. The prolonged strain had deadened my faculties a little, and for

ing the room, lest I should think, and wish that he might die.

If he lived! The birds twittered it as they woke in the trees, and fluttered to and from upon the eaves; and I heard it in the wakening city's indescribable hum. I clenched my hands, and turned away from the window to watch the white bust on the sideboard—Carlyle, saver of souls!—grow brighter and



"AND WE KNELT SIDE BY SIDE"

some ten minutes I gazed vacantly across the square at the housetops turning from black to grey, and at the moon growing pale in the coming light. The world looked dreary and lonely, and something in the greyness and desolation comforted me. Then, as the light grew stronger, my mind seemed waking again into cruel thought. I forced my attention to the brightening edges of the clouds in the east, to the sharpening of the housetops' outlines against the sky, to the track of the light that was invad-

brighter, as if it were giving out the light which shone upon it. "For the first of all Gospels is this, that a lie cannot endure for ever!" These were the words that he said. Now it was going to end—my lie—if he lived! No, it was the past that was a lie, not the present. Ten years of good life, one year of Margaret, had made me a man again. It was no lie. I went back to the old lie—if he lived.

If he lived! Not think of it? I *must* think of it. I saw myself with my head

bowed before Margaret to escape the agony in her eyes. I saw myself dependent on her love and pity, and no more her valiant protector and guide. No, it should not be—I would put the world between us sooner!

If he lived—and I went away? I saw Margaret standing by the window, with her face grown thin, her eyes listless, and her lips compressed and hard, looking for my return, which never came. I fancied her step grown slower, and her voice softer—that was always so soft—and her fingers thinner, that were already

white and thin. I thought that she staggered a little and pressed her hand to her side; and I saw her eyes mutely calling, calling——! And from my lips there came a hoarse murmur, "O God, let him die! Let him die!"

Suddenly there was a movement above; then a footfall upon the stairs. The door opened, and Margaret, with her hair fallen about her face, staggered into my arms.

"God has heard our prayers!" she cried. "He lives!"

IN APRIL

WITH ever a lighter note,
With ever a merrier rhyme,
I live as a bird that has tuned his throat
To joy for his mating time.

My heart at the dawn doth thrill,
And mine eyelids swift upleap—
Tho' I say to my heart, "Be still, be still!"
Tho' I say to mine eyes, "O, sleep!"

The glory of day comes in,
And I catch at the hands of the sun;
And I ask, tho' I know, "Do I win, do I win?"
And the bright eye smiles, "You have won!"

The trees at my window move,
To show me their buds that ope.
O, the world is decked in a flush of Love,
And belted around with Hope!

There, on the green below,
The crocuses mingle and meet—
Some gold, some purple, some white as the snow
That melted and left them sweet.

So, love has come sweet to me
Who waited the winter thro'.
O, the gladdest of all glad men is he
Who knows that his love is true.

J. J. BELL

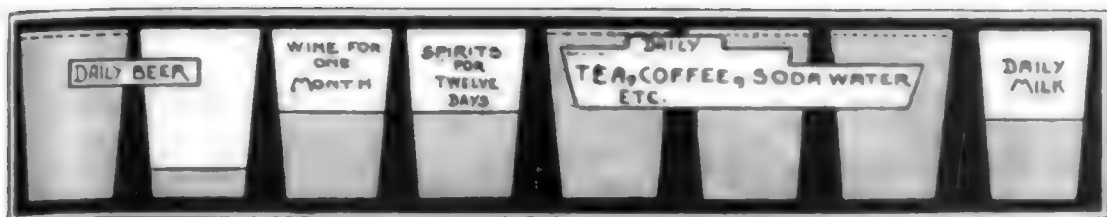
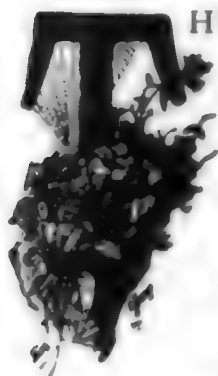


FIG. 1

The National Thirst

WRITTEN BY HAROLD MACFARLANE. ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOS



HERE was once a man who lived fifty-four years, and then died suddenly. The tables of statistics show conclusively that there have been instances known of other men who have died at the same age, but the surprising part of the affair consists in the fact that the man ever lived as long as he did. The only funeral oration spoken over the deceased came from the lips of one whose identity is hidden under the anonymity of "A Juror": reflectively he quoth, "What a customer the whisky people have lost!" and the words were as full of truth as the departed man was wont to be of spirits. For fifteen years the thirsty one had partaken every night of eighteen half-quartens of whisky, and of ale and stout no man reckoned any more than they did of his morning and afternoon beverages. The man died suddenly at the age of fifty-four, and it was not drink that killed him.

We are not all so thirsty as the afore-mentioned individual, however. We like our glass of beer—perhaps we like two glasses—but books that are Blue tell us that in the year we are individually content with less than thirty-one gallons of that beverage "called ale among men, but by the gods called beer"; of wine, three and one-fifth pints, and of spirits rather

over one gallon, are, on an average, sufficient for our needs. In addition to these intoxicants the Londoner on an average receives for all purposes thirty-eight gallons of water daily; a good portion of this he uses perhaps for his matutinal tub—perhaps he doesn't—but whatever purpose he puts it to we are ready to pledge our word that he does not drink it all. For the purpose of our calculations we have decided that our typical Londoner (and indeed each inhabitant of the United Kingdom) uses one two-hundred-and-third part of his daily water allowance for drinking purposes, and out of this daily one pint and a-half he makes his tea, coffee, cocoa, soda water, &c., and the "&c." includes a variety of fluids known as temperance drinks, together with that amount of the liquid that he drinks in its natural, un-

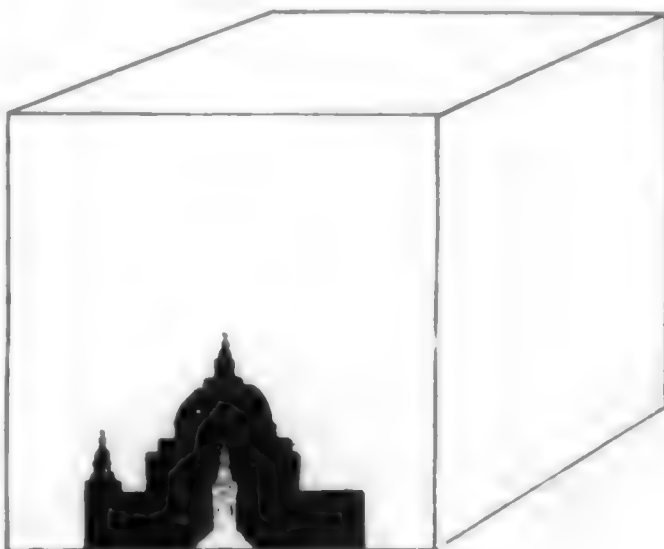


FIG. 2

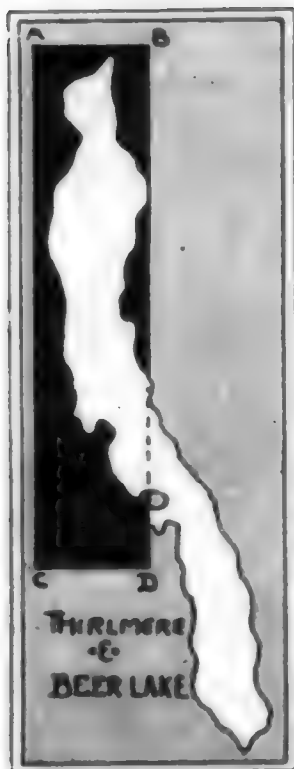


FIG. 3

are entitled to one full glass and one-sixth of a full glass, or, to be exact, 0.6728 pints a day; of wine our daily allowance would have to be measured with a "dropper," for in thirty days our 208,769 pints will only amount to a quarter of a pint, or half an ordinary tumblerful; and as the same amount of spirits is allowed to us every twelve days, this shows that our appreciation for spirits is just two and a-half times as great as our taste for wine. In allowing each inhabitant of Great Britain and Ireland a solitary pint and a-half of drinking water and less than a gill of milk per diem, we feel that we are not doing the Temperance cause justice, but we desire, when using arbitrary figures, to be well within the margin that borders on exaggeration; let us hasten to add that the calculation regarding the various beverages in the bulk are entirely satisfactory from the water-drinkers' point of view. (Brewery shareholders have no reason to grumble either.)

"But my doctor will not allow me to touch beer, wine or spirits, except the merest thimbleful purely as a medicine, and I have several glasses of milk a day," exclaims a dear lady.

diluted state—the latter item, we are afraid, does not amount to much.

Fig. 1 represents the daily allowance (with two exceptions) of drinkables which each individual in the United Kingdom is entitled to according to the laws of averages: each of the glasses, holding, when full of liquid, half a pint, is filled to a different height varying with the allowance. Of beer, we see, we

"Madam," we reply, "there is some one somewhere in the United Kingdom, *at* fifty-four or more or less, who daily sacrifices himself on your behalf, and perhaps that of others, by drinking your portion of beer as well as that of other non-beer drinkers in addition to his own share; moreover, he gallantly hands over his milk-jug to you saying, 'You want it more than I do.'"

"What generosity, what nobleness of character!" she urges. We turn to fresh facts.

In 1820 the number of inhabitants per square mile of the United Kingdom was 148, in 1890 the figures had increased to 184, and in this year of grace they are still greater; when we consider that there are 121,000 square miles thus covered, it follows that we are a fairly numerous family, and we are therefore not surprised when we learn that in the year we manage to drink over 1,212 million gallons of beer, 15,800,000 gallons of wine, almost forty million gallons of

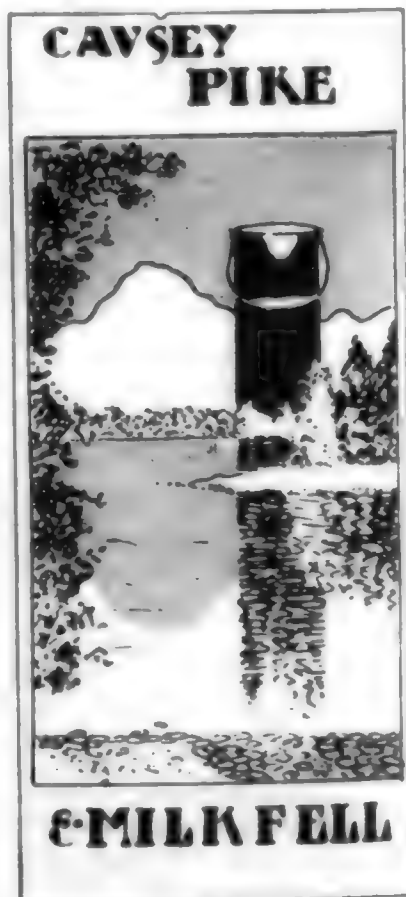


FIG. 4



FIG. 5

spirits, not to mention 395 million gallons of milk and over 2,703 million gallons of water: we are not surprised, nor should we be if the figures were ten times as great or ten times as little, as it is almost impossible in the form of figures to realise their immensity. We see at a glance, however, that we drink more than two and a-half times as much spirits as wine, exactly twenty-five times more milk than wine, seventy-six and three-quarter times more beer than

wine, and our wine is diluted with water in the proportion of 1 to 171. To show this pictorially we should, if we allowed the column representing our consumption of wine to be one inch high, require a page 14 feet 3 inches long in order to get in the water column. We quickly abandoned the idea of graphically portraying the difference.

Fig. 2, we observe, represents a large cube with a blot on one side. The cube represents a block of ice, which, if melted, would transform itself into a respectable flood and 2,703 million gallons of water, our drinking-water allowance. The cube is not far short

of 780 feet long (776·58 feet, accurately speaking), and being a cube its other dimensions are similar. Its contents include 17,350,200 cubic yards of material, which does not compare very favourably with the amount contained in the great Wall of China, which contains over 230 millions; but they serve a far more useful purpose. The base of this huge iceberg rests on almost fourteen acres of ground, which is larger than either "Lords," or the "Oval," and is about one-thirtieth part the area of Hyde Park. With regard to the blot, its dimensions (length and height) are those of St. Paul's Cathedral drawn on the same scale as the cube, and the object inside St. Paul's shows the relative height of the Albert Memorial as compared to the ice-cube. Before dismissing the cube we would point out that its weight is equivalent to that of seventeen hundred and twenty-four Eiffel Towers as made in France, and is a subject that cannot be treated lightly.

The parallelogram A B C D in Fig. 3 represents a map of Beer Lake, a tract of liquid remarkable for its uniformity of coast-line: partially superposed and partially stretching far beyond "Alefoot," we see a plan of Thirlmere as it is, now



DEERWENTWATER AND CAUSEY PIKE



THIRLMERE FROM THE DAM

that the good people of Manchester have turned it into their reservoir and raised the water level. It may be remarked that the breadth of Beer Lake is greater than that of Thirlmere, and that that part of the former lake marked black, which shows the portion of the lake not covered by the reservoir, would more than cover the southern end of the mere; but although the breadth of Beer Lake (half a mile) is as great as the widest portion of Coniston, Wast Water, or Grasmere, and its length is equal to that of the latter lake added to Buttermere, it must be mentioned that there are parts of Thirlmere over one hundred feet deep, whilst Beer Lake has a uniform depth of only two yards. There are few more beautiful sights than the landscape

spread before one when standing on the great dam on an autumn afternoon when the leaves are turning red or yellow; but alas, we cannot deny the fact that some there be, *et al* fifty-four, or more or less, who would gladly exchange the glorious colours of Thirlmere's foliage for the deep amber of the Lake of Beer.

After this sad reflection it is comforting to know that to hold one year's drinking-water supply, a lake

would have to be made five miles and one hundred yards long (Beer Lake is less than two and a quarter miles in length), half a mile broad, and six feet deep: that is to say, the length would be half that of Windermere or as long as Derwentwater, Grasmere, Rydalmere, and Brothers Water put together, which



BOWDER STONE, BORROWDALE

compares very favourably with the pond containing our spirit consumption for one year, the dimensions of which are six feet deep, 100 yards wide, and 1,184 yards long; moreover, whereas the skating on the former might be extremely good, the latter sheet of liquid would never be a popular resort—at all events, not for skating.

Our fourth figure represents a small portion of Derwentwater and Lords Island, with Causey Pike in the background, and an exaggerated and particularly dirty-looking milk-can very prominent beside it. The dimensions of the milk-can, except its height, are not drawn to scale; but it is 100 yards broad and 100 feet deep, and it contains our yearly milk supply of 395 million gallons. Causey Pike is 2,050 feet high, and our milk-can is 2,111 3-5 feet tall, or more than twice the height of the original Eiffel Tower; the difference in the height of the can and the mountain appears greater than 61 feet would justify, but this is accounted for by the fact that the height of the Pike is calculated from the sea level, whilst the can stands at the level of the lake—about 280 feet above the level of the sea.

The fountains in Trafalgar Square, which were designed by Barry, throw 500 gallons a minute when in play; if, instead of working thirteen hours a day in the summer and seven in the winter, as is now their practice, they were kept working night and day, summer and winter, and they threw a jet of milk instead of water, they would at the end of the sidereal year have emptied two-thirds of the afore-mentioned grimy-looking milk-can, *i.e.*, the level of the milk left in the can would only be four and a-half times as high as Nelson's monument, statue and all.

With regard to the amount expended on their yearly thirst by the inhabitants of the United Kingdom, it is difficult to form an estimate; but if we put the sum for intoxicants alone at ninety-nine million pounds, we are assuredly not erring on the side of exaggeration. Ninety-nine millions is a large sum; if taken in the form of sovereigns, these would, when touching rim to rim, extend from Plymouth to Madeira as the steamer ploughs, or from London to beyond Malta or Bucharest, or almost to St. Petersburg, as the crow flies—if that bird does fly to those regions. Laid three abreast, the sovereigns would make a narrow path down the Great North Road from London to Edinburgh, and leave over thirteen million sovereigns unemployed. The same millions, if run up in columns as high as Scafell Pike, would provide one hundred and fifty-five such columns, with a small cairn left over, consisting of £280,238.

The parallelogram A B C D, in Fig. 5, represents a curtain of sovereigns 340 feet high and 107 feet wide, formed of 1,467 columns of sovereigns—their number totals close upon 98,685,000. Looming through the curtain, as if the latter were but a native fog, we see, by the kind agency of Röntgen or other potent rays, the Victoria Tower of the Palace of Westminster drawn on the same scale as the curtain, and, it is hoped, that we thus get from the comparison some idea regarding the cost of the national thirst for intoxicants. We can only add that the weight of the millions we thus expend would, if in the shape of sovereigns, amount to over 778 tons, or two-thirds of the reputed weight of that bulky pebble known in Borrowdale as the Bowder Stone.



Photography and Exploration

ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOGRAPHS

THERE is more to be said about photography and photographers than artists who cannot think of anything but art have any idea of. Because photography, besides being as artistic as is possible to a more suspicious of too much chatter about art, remembering this practice of the owl. And all this we set forth as a preface, because there is apt to be some scoffing in more or less æsthetic circles about what is called "mere photography."



T.R.H. PRINCE ALBERT AND PRINCE EDWARD OF YORK

or less mechanical process, can be of the greatest value apart from art altogether. There is an immense deal of talk about art nowadays, and that is often the case when no very big thing in art is being done. The Owl of Minerva, it has been said, does not begin its flight until the shadows begin to fall: which, by a free translation, means that philosophy is wise after the event, but asleep at the shaping of it. So we do well to be

For this article, as it happens, is all about a photographer who has travelled in far places and seen many strange things. When he was only twenty-one years of age Mr. J. Thomson, who is now by Royal warrant photographer to her Majesty the Queen, had the pluck to follow the example of so many of his compatriots—Scotsmen, of course—and visit foreign lands through the mere love of roaming, and desire to see and know

things undreamed of by the multitude. After studying at Edinburgh University, where, under Professor Playfair, who then filled the Chair of Chemistry, he learned much that was invaluable to him in after years, Mr. Thomson was seized with the idea of exploring more or less unknown countries with as little baggage as possible beyond a camera, which in these days was almost baggage enough. His first expedition was to

result of his explorations; and, nothing daunted, set forth again on a much more protracted and dangerous voyage of discovery through China.

"And what do you think of the Chinese?" a representative of *The Ludgate* asked Mr. Thomson.

"I like them," he said, "and formed, on the whole, a very good opinion of them. Like the Turks, the people are good, but the government is rotten. At



THE MARCHIONESS OF GRANBY AND CHILDREN

Cambodia, which lies between Siam and Tonquin. There he saw and photographed architectural remains of palaces and temples that in their days could not have been surpassed in grandeur and sculptural adornment throughout the whole of India. On his return to this country Mr. Thomson read papers about his travels before many of the learned societies. Ultimately he published in volume form, with many interesting photographs, the

the seaport towns, of course, the Chinese are not so admirable in their general behaviour; but the seaport towns have not a good reputation anywhere. In the interior, however, I found them generally quiet, simple and inoffensive."

"Were you never in danger of your life travelling alone among them?"

"Several times," said Mr. Thomson. "They are barbarians and very superstitious. Besides, they—especially the governing classes—have a natural hatred

of all 'foreign devils.' And if a 'foreign devil' carries a camera about with him he must do it to a certain extent at his own risk. On one occasion I

terrible spectacle to them with the black cloth over your head? They would naturally enough think you were something uncanny."



LORD ELGIN'S DAUGHTER

remember I was at Fatshan, and was taking a photograph of something that interested me. My position was close to the bank of the river, and I had hardly noticed that a silent crowd had slowly gathered around me. Suddenly some one raised a shout, and the next moment I was surrounded by a yelling mob of maniacs. Resistance was impossible, and my camera and I were flung into the river. I should certainly have shared the fate of my camera and remained permanently at the bottom of the river had not some Chinamen who were in a boat near at hand taken compassion on me and come to my rescue. That was a very narrow escape."

"I daresay you presented rather a

"Yes, Chinamen have a curious notion of photography. They imagine that photographers have some secret and mysterious means of melting down the eyes of little children with which they are able to make their pictures."

"Certainly a photograph is very different from a Chinese picture. The very difference might suggest something unnatural in the means adopted to produce it."

"Perhaps. Anyway, the fear of it is not restricted to the masses, but is shared by all classes; at least it was so in the sixties. On one occasion I had travelled very far inland, about fourteen hundred miles up the Yang-tsi, and was taking a photograph of a rapid. A Mandarin who was travelling in considerable state had his curi-

osity excited, and inquired of me what I was doing. Many questions I had to answer, for the Chinese are very inquisitive. At length I approached the Mandarin to show him some of the photographs I had taken. The effect on him was instantaneous. He shrank from me as though I was plague-stricken, and hurried off to the village whither I myself was going, where he informed the villagers that the devil himself was on his way to visit them. Accordingly, when I did show my face among them, I had what I suppose may be called a characteristically hot reception. Bricks and stones and mud were thrown at me, and I found it impossible to make them listen to reason. One rather curious

incident struck me at the time as showing that the Chinaman's reverence for his parents does not always begin when they are alive. The Mandarin had spread the report that anyone who happened to be photographed was certain to die soon from the evil effects of the operation. All the children were withdrawn from my evil influence, lest, I suppose, I should levy toll upon their eyes; but all the old people in the village were left entirely to my tender mercies. My adventures, however, for that day were not yet quite at an end. Seeing no chance of hospitality among those who took me for the devil, I returned to where I had left my boat and crossed to the other side of the river. The boats are very long, and the oars of immense length. They are worked from the stern, so that the boat can be turned round as if on a pivot. When I was crossing, a Chinaman in another boat thought himself wily enough to capsize the devil, even though he was a Scotsman. When I was within easy reach of his oar he accordingly swung it round so as to strike and capsize me into the river. Seeing his intention, however, I flung myself against the oar, with the result that it was the Chinaman and not the devil who got a good drenching. He was picked up a little below the rapids, not much the worse for his fall."

"Doubtless he was convinced by that time that it was impossible to contend with the devil. Were you ever compelled to kill anyone in self-defence?"

"No," said Mr. Thomson with evi-

dent satisfaction, "I was not. The principle on which I travelled was that of the old Spanish proverb, that he who travels gently travels slow, and he who travels slow travels far."

"But when you travelled so far inland you must have experienced great difficulty in procuring the means to carry on your photographic experiments."

"That is so," said Mr. Thomson. "All the illustrations in my book on China were taken by means of wet collodion plates, and I had to make them all myself. It was then that I found my knowledge of chemistry stand me in great stead."



"CHUMS"

"Did you go in for collecting old china and other curios?"

"I wish I had, and I should have been a very rich man to-day. In the sixties



MRS. GROVE AND HER CHILDREN

when I was there I could have bought for a few shillings things that are now valued at hundreds of pounds."

"How long is it since you have taken to photography professionally?"

"About a dozen years ago. I presented a copy of my work on China to her Majesty, and when I started here at Grosvenor Street she was pleased to appoint me 'Photographer to the Queen.' This photograph of her Majesty," said Mr. Thomson, pointing to one which certainly seemed to an amateur super-

coloured photographs, not to mention some very charming landscapes in oil by Mr. Thomson himself. In another room were to be seen many backgrounds, against which some of the most beautiful and distinguished ladies in the land have sat to be photographed. Mr. Thomson paints these himself in black and white, and their depth and suggestiveness prove Mr. Thomson an artist. He gained the gold medal for photography in the great Paris Exhibition of 1889. For his work on China Mr. Thomson



BROTHER AND SISTER

latively good, "is the last I have done. The Dowager-Empress Frederick, who is an artist herself of some repute, thinks it the most beautifully modelled one of the Queen she has ever seen. Indeed, the Empress has worked upon it herself. No," continued Mr. Thomson, reflectively, "I don't think I can improve upon that."

Mr. Thomson's studio is filled with beautiful examples of his art, not only in photography but in miniatures, some of which have been done by his own hand. Pastels also you may there see, and

also received a medal and diploma from the International Geographical Congress of Paris. But, perhaps, the most delightful illustration of Mr. Thomson's work as a photographer is to be seen in the catalogues of works of art belonging to such great collections as those of Mr. Alfred Rothschild, the Duke of Bedford, Baron Ferdinand Rothschild and the late Sir Richard Wallace. The extraordinary delicacy and beauty of his reproductions of these priceless works of art must be seen to be appreciated.



WRITTEN BY STEPHEN CRANE. ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN H. BACON

THEY were youths of subtle mind. They were very wicked according to report, and yet they managed to have it reflect great credit upon them. They often had the well-informed and the great talkers of the American colony engaged in reciting their misdeeds, and facts relating to their sins were usually told with a flourish of awe and fine admiration.

One was from San Francisco and one was from New York, but they resembled each other in appearance. This is an idiosyncrasy of geography.

They were never apart in the city of Mexico—at any rate, excepting perhaps when one had retired to his hotel for a respite, and then the other was usually camped down at the office sending up servants with clamorous messages. “O, get up and come on down.”

They were two lads—they were called the kids—and far from their mothers. Occasionally some wise man pitied them, but he usually was alone in his wisdom. The other folk frankly were transfixed at the splendour of the audacity and endurance of these kids.

“When do those boys ever sleep?” murmured a man as he viewed them entering a café about eight o’clock one

morning. Their smooth infantile faces looked bright and fresh enough, at any rate. “Jim told me he saw them still at it about 4.30 this morning.”

“Sleep!” ejaculated a companion in a glowing voice. “They never sleep! They go to bed once in every two weeks.” His boast of it seemed almost a personal pride.

“They’ll end with a crash, though, if they keep it up at this pace,” said a gloomy voice from behind a newspaper.

The Café Colorado has a front of white and gold, in which is set larger plate-glass windows than are commonly to be found in Mexico. Two little wings of willow flip-flapping incessantly serve as doors. Under them small stray dogs go furtively into the café, and are shied into the street again by the waiters. On the side-walk there is always a decorative effect of loungers, ranging from the newly-arrived and superior tourist to the old veteran of the silver mines bronzed by violent suns. They contemplate with various shades of interest the show of the street—the red, purple, dusty white, glaring forth against the walls in the furious sunshine.

One afternoon the kids strolled into the Café Colorado. A half-dozen of the

men who sat smoking and reading with a sort of Parisian effect at the little tables which lined two sides of the room, looked up and bowed smiling, and although this coming of the kids was anything but an unusual event, at least a dozen men wheeled in their chairs to stare after them. Three waiters polished tables, and moved chairs noisily, and appeared to be eager. Distinctly these kids were of importance.

Behind the distant bar, the tall form of old Pop himself awaited them smiling with broad geniality. "Well, my boys, how are you?" he cried in a voice of profound solicitude. He allowed five or six of his customers to languish in the care of Mexican bar-tenders, while he himself gave his eloquent attention to the kids, lending all the dignity of a great event to their arrival. "How are the boys to-day, eh?"

"You're a smooth old guy," said one, eyeing him. "Are you giving us this welcome so we won't notice it when you push your worst whisky at us?"

Pop turned in appeal from one kid to the other kid. "There, now, hear that, will you?" He assumed an oratorical pose. "Why, my boys, you always get the best that this house has got."

"Yes, we do!" The kids laughed. "Well, bring it out, anyhow, and if it's the same you sold us last night, we'll grab your cash register and run."

Pop whirled a bottle along the bar and then gazed at it with a rapt expression. "Fine as silk," he murmured. "Now just taste that, and if it isn't the best whisky you ever put in your face, why I'm a liar, that's all."

The kids surveyed him with scorn, and poured their allowances. Then they stood for a time insulting Pop about his whisky. "Usually it tastes exactly like new parlour furniture," said the San Francisco kid. "Well, here goes, and you want to look out for your cash register."

"Your health, gentlemen," said Pop with a grand air, and as he wiped his bristling grey moustaches he wagged his head with reference to the cash register question. "I could catch you before you got very far."

"Why, are you a runner?" said one derisively.

"You just bank on me, my boy," said Pop, with deep emphasis. "I'm a flier."

The kids sat down their glasses suddenly and looked at him. "You must be," they said. Pop was tall and graceful and magnificent in manner, but he did not display those qualities of form which mean speed in the animal. His hair was grey; his face was round and fat from much living. The buttons of his glittering white waistcoat formed a fine curve, so that if the concave surface of a piece of barrel-hoop had been laid against Pop it would have touched every button. "You must be," observed the kids again.

"Well, you can laugh all you like, but —no jolly now, boys, I tell you I'm a winner. Why, I bet you I can skin anything in this town on a square go. When I kept my place in Eagle Pass there wasn't anybody who could touch me. One of these sure things came down from San Anton. O, he was a runner he was. One of these people with wings. Well, I skinned 'im. What? Certainly I did. Never touched me."

The kids had been regarding him in grave silence, but at this moment they grinned, and said quite in chorus, "O, you old liar!"

Pop's voice took on a whining tone of earnestness. "Boys, I'm telling it to you straight. I'm a flier."

One of the kids had had a dreamy cloud in his eye and he cried out suddenly: "Say, what a joke to play this on Freddie."

The other jumped ecstatically. "O, wouldn't it though. Say, he wouldn't do a thing but howl! He'd go crazy."

They looked at Pop as if they longed to be certain that he was, after all, a runner. "Now, Pop, on the leve," said one of them, wistfully, "can you run?"

"Boys," swore Pop, "I'm a peach! On the dead level I'm a peach."

"By golly, I believe the old Indian can run," said one to the other, as if they were alone in confidence.

"That's what I can," cried Pop.

The kids said: "Well, so long, old man." They went to a table and sat

down. They ordered a salad. They were always ordering salads. This was because one kid had a wild passion for salads, and the other didn't care. So at any hour of the day they might be seen ordering a salad. When this one came they went into a sort of executive session. It was a very long consultation. Men noted it. Occasionally the kids laughed in supreme enjoyment of something unknown. The low rumble of wheels came from the street. Often could be heard the parrot-like cries of distant vendors. The sunlight streamed through the green curtains, and made little amber-coloured flitterings on the marble floor. High up among the severe decorations of the ceiling—reminiscent of the days when the great building was a palace—a small white butterfly was wending through the cool air spaces. The long billiard hall led back to a vague gloom. The balls were always clicking, and one could see countless crooked elbows. Beggars slunk through the wicker doors, and were ejected by the nearest waiter. At last the kids called Pop to them.

"Sit down, Pop. Have a drink." They scanned him carefully. "Say now, Pop, on your solemn oath, can you run?"

"Boys," said Pop piously, and raising his hand, "I can run like a rabbit."

"On your oath?"

"On my oath."

"Can you beat Freddie?"

Pop appeared to look at the matter from all sides. "Well, boys, I'll tell you. No man is ever cock-sure of anything in this world, and I don't want to say that I can best any man, but I've seen Freddie run, and I'm ready to swear I can beat him. In a hundred yards I'd just about skin 'im neat—you understand, just about neat. Freddie is a good average runner, but I—you understand—I'm just—a little—bit—better." The kids had been listening with the utmost attention. Pop spoke the latter part slowly and meanfully. They thought he intended them to see his great confidence.

One said: "Pop, if you throw us in this thing, we'll come here and drink for two weeks without paying. We'll back

you and work a josh on Freddie! But O!—if you throw us!"

To this menace Pop cried: "Boys, I'll make the run of my life! On my oath!"

The salad having vanished, the kids arose. "All right, now," they warned him. "If you play us for duffers, we'll get square. Don't you forget it."

"Boys, I'll give you a race for your money. Book on that. I may lose—understand, I may lose—no man can help meeting a better man. But I think I can skin him, and I'll give you a run for your money, you bet."

"All right, then. But, look here," they told him, "you keep your face closed. Nobody gets in on this but us. Understand?"

"Not a soul," Pop declared. They left him, gesturing a last warning from the wicker doors.

In the street they saw Benson, his cane gripped in the middle, strolling through the white-clothed jabbering natives on the shady side. They semaphored to him eagerly. He came across cautiously, like a man who ventures into dangerous company.

"We're going to get up a race. Pop and Fred. Pop swears he can skin 'im. This is a tip. Keep it dark. Say, won't Freddie be hot!"

Benson looked as if he had been compelled to endure these exhibitions of insanity for a century. "O, you fellows are off. Pop can't beat Freddie. He's an old bat. Why, it's impossible. Pop can't beat Freddie."

"Can't he? Want to bet he can't?" said the kids. "There now, let's see—you're talking so large."

"Well, you——"

"O, bet. Bet or else close your trap. That's the way."

"How do you know you can pull off the race. Seen Freddie?"

"No, but——"

"Well, see him then. Can't bet with no race arranged. I'll bet with you, all right—all right. I'll give you fellows a tip though—you're a pair of asses. Pop can't run any faster than a brick school-house."

The kids scowled at him and defiantly



"THE KIDS HAD MUCH BUSINESS WITH CERTAIN ORANGE, RED, BLUE, PURPLE AND GREEN BILLS"

said: "Can't he?" They left him and went to the Casa Verde. Freddie, beautiful in his white jacket, was holding one of his innumerable conversations across the bar. He smiled when he saw them. "Where you boys been?" he demanded, in a paternal tone. Almost all the proprietors of American cafés in the city used to adopt a paternal tone when they spoke to the kids.

"O, been 'round," they replied.

"Have a drink?" said the proprietor

of the Casa Verde, forgetting his other social obligation. During the course of this ceremony one of the kids remarked: "Freddie, Pop says he can beat you running."

"Does he?" observed Freddie without excitement. He was used to various snares of the kids.

"That's what. He says he can leave you at the wire and not see you again."

"Well, he lies," replied Freddie placidly.

"And I'll bet you a bottle of wine that he can do it, too."

"Rats!" said Freddie.

"O, that's all right," pursued a kid. "You can throw bluffs all you like, but he can lose you in a hundred yards dash, you bet."

Freddie drank his whisky, and then settled his elbows on the bar.

"Say, now, what do you boys keep coming in here with some pipe-story all the time for? You can't josh me. Do you think you can scare me about Pop? Why, I know I can beat him. He can't run with me. Certainly not. Why you fellows are just jollyng me."

"Are we, though," said the kids. "You daren't bet the bottle of wine."

"O, of course, I can bet you a bottle of wine," said Freddie disdainfully. "Nobody cares about a bottle of wine, but——"

"Well, make it five, then," advised one of the kids.

Freddie hunched his shoulders. "Why, certainly I will. Make it ten if you like, but——"

"We do," they said.

"Ten, is it? All right; that goes." A look of weariness came over Freddie's face. "But you boys are foolish. I tell you Pop is an old man. How can you expect him to run? Of course, I'm no great runner, but then I'm young and healthy and—and a pretty smooth runner, too. Pop is old and fat, and then he doesn't do a thing but tank all day. It's a clinch."

The kids looked at him and laughed rapturously. They waved their fingers at him. "Ah, there!" they cried. They meant they had made a victim of him.

But Freddie continued to expostulate. "I tell you he couldn't win—an old man like him. You're crazy. Of course, I know you don't care about ten bottles of wine, but, then—to make such bets as that. You're twisted."

"Are we, though?" cried the kids in mockery. They had precipitated Freddie into a long and thoughtful treatise on every possible chance of the thing as he saw it. They disputed with him from time to time, and jeered at him. He laboured on through his argument.

Their childish faces were bright with glee.

In the midst of it Wilburson entered. Wilburson worked; not too much, though. He had hold of the Mexican end of a great importing house of New York, and as he was a junior partner he worked. But not too much, though. "What's the howl?" he said.

The kids giggled. "We've got Freddie rattled."

"Why," said Freddie, turning to him, "these two Indians are trying to tell me that Pop can beat me running."

"Like the devil," said Wilburson, incredulously.

"Well, can't he?" demanded a kid.

"Why, certainly not," said Wilburson, dismissing every possibility of it with a gesture. "That old bat? Certainly not. I'll bet fifty dollars that Freddie——"

"Take you," said a kid.

"What?" said Wilburson, "that Freddie won't beat Pop?"

The kid that had spoken now nodded his head.

"That Freddie won't beat Pop?" repeated Wilburson.

"Yes. It's a go?"

"Why, certainly," retorted Wilburson. "Fifty? All right."

"Bet you five bottles on the side," ventured the other kid.

"Why, certainly," exploded Wilburson, wrathfully. "You fellows must take me for something easy. I'll take all those kinds of bets I can get. Cer—tain—ly."

They settled the details. The course was to be paced off on the asphalt of one of the adjacent side-streets, and then, at about eleven o'clock in the evening, the match would be run. Usually in Mexico the streets of a city grow lonely and dark but a little after nine o'clock. There are occasional lurking figures, perhaps, but no crowds, lights and noise. The course would doubtless be undisturbed. As for the policemen in the vicinity, they—well, they were conditionally amiable.

The kids went to see Pop; they told him of the arrangement, and then in deep tones they said, "O, Pop, if you throw us!"

Pop appeared to be a trifle shaken by

the weight of responsibility thrust upon him, but he spoke out bravely. "Boys, I'll pinch that race. Now you watch me. I'll pinch it."

The kids went then on some business of their own, for they were not seen again till evening. When they returned to the neighbourhood of the *Café Colorado* the usual stream of carriages was whirling along the calle. The wheels hummed on the asphalt, and the coachmen towered in their great sombreros. On the sidewalk a gazing crowd sauntered, the better class self-satisfied and proud, in their Derby hats and cutaway coats, the lower classes muffling their dark faces in their blankets, slipping along in leather sandals. An electric light sputtered and fumed over the throng. The afternoon shower had left the pavé wet and glittering. The air was still laden with the odour of rain on flowers, grass, leaves.

In the *Café Colorado* a cosmopolitan crowd ate, drank, played billiards, gossiped or read in the glaring yellow light. When the kids entered a large circle of men that had been gesticulating near the bar greeted them with a roar.

"Here they are now!"

"O, you pair of peaches!"

"Say, got any more money to bet with?" Colonel Hammigan, grinning, pushed his way to them. "Say, boys, we'll all have a drink on you now because you won't have any money after eleven o'clock. You'll be going down the back stairs in your stocking feet."

Although the kids remained unnaturally serene and quiet, argument in the *Café Colorado* became tumultuous. Here and there a man who did not intend to bet ventured meekly that perchance Pop might win, and the others swarmed upon him in a whirlwind of angry denial and ridicule.

Pop, enthroned behind the bar, looked over at this storm with a shadow of anxiety upon his face. This widespread flouting affected him, but the kids looked blissfully satisfied with the tumult they had stirred.

Blanco, honest man, ever worrying for his friends, came to them. "Say, you fellows, you aren't betting too much?

This thing looks kind of shaky, don't it?"

The faces of the kids grew sober, and after consideration one said: "No, I guess we've got a good thing, Blanco. Pop is going to surprise them, I think."

"Well, don't——"

"All right, old boy. We'll watch out."

From time to time the kids had much business with certain orange, red, blue, purple, and green bills. They were making little memoranda on the back of visiting cards. Pop watched them closely, the shadow still upon his face. Once he called to them, and when they came he leaned over the bar and said intently: "Say, boys, remember, now—I might lose this race. Nobody can ever say for sure, and if I do, why——"

"O, that's all right, Pop," said the kids, reassuringly. "Don't mind it. Do your derndest and let it go at that."

When they had left him, however, they went to a corner to consult. "Say, this is getting interesting. Are you in deep?" asked one anxiously of his friend.

"Yes, pretty deep," said the other stolidly. "Are you?"

"Deep as the devil," replied the other in the same tone.

They looked at each other stonily and went back to the crowd. Benson had just entered the café. He approached them with a gloating smile of victory. "Well, where's all that money you were going to bet?"

"Right here," said the kids, thrusting into their waistcoat pockets.

At eleven o'clock a curious thing was learned. When Pop and Freddie, the kids and all, came to the little side street, it was thick with people. It seemed that the news of this race had spread like the wind among the Americans, and they had come to witness the event. In the darkness the crowd moved, mumbling in argument.

The principals—the kids and those with them—surveyed this scene with some dismay. "Say—here's a go." Even then a policeman might be seen approaching, the light from his little lantern flickering on his white cap,



"ONCE A KID PUT HIS HEAD OUT OF THE WINDOW"

gloves, brass buttons, and on the butt of the old-fashioned Colt's revolver which hung at his belt. He addressed Freddie in swift Mexican. Freddie listened, nodding from time to time. Finally Freddie turned to the others to translate. "He says he'll get into trouble if

he allows this race when all this crowd is here."

There was a murmur of dissent. The policeman looked at them with an expression of anxiety on his broad, brown face.

"O, come on. We'll go hold on

some other fellow's beat," said one of the kids. The group moved slowly away debating. Suddenly the other kid cried, "I know! The Paseo!"

"By jiminy," said Freddie, "just the thing. We'll get a cab and go out to the Paseo. S-s-h! Keep it quiet; we don't want all this mob."

Later they tumbled into a cab—Pop, Freddie, the kids, old Colonel Ham-migan and Benson. They whispered to the man who had wagered, "The Paseo." The cab whirled away up the black street. There were occasional grunts and groans, cries of "O, get off me feet," and of "Quit! you're killing me." Six people do not have fun in one cab. The principals spoke to each other with the respect and friendliness which comes to good men at such times. Once a kid put his head out of the window and looked backward. He pulled it in again and cried, "Great Scott! Look at that, would you!"

The others struggled to do as they were bid, and afterwards shouted, "Holy smoke! Well, I'll be blowed! Thunder and turf!"

Galloping after them came innumerable cabs, their lights twinkling, streaming in a great procession through the night.

"The street is full of them," ejaculated the old colonel.

The Paseo de la Reforma is the famous drive of the city of Mexico, leading to the Castle of Chapultepec, which last ought to be well known in the United States.

It is a fine broad avenue of macadam with a much greater quality of dignity than anything of the kind we possess in our own land. It seems of the old world, where to the beauty of the thing itself is added the solemnity of tradition and history, the knowledge that feet in buskins trod the same stones, that cavalcades of steel thundered there before the coming of carriages.

When the Americans tumbled out of their cabs the giant bronzes of Aztec and Spaniard loomed dimly above them like towers. The four roads of poplar trees rustled weirdly off there in the darkness. Pop took out his watch and

struck a match. "Well, hurry up this thing. It's almost midnight."

The other cabs came swarming, the drivers lashing their horses, for these Americans, who did all manner of strange things, nevertheless always paid well for it. There was a mighty hub-bub then in the darkness. Five or six men began to pace the distance and quarrel. Others knotted their handkerchiefs together to make a tape. Men were swearing over Lets, fussing and fuming about the odds. Benson came to the kids swaggering. "You're a pair of asses." The cabs waited in a solid block down the avenue. Above the crowd the tall statues hid their visages in the night.

At last a voice floated through the darkness. "Are you ready there?" Everybody yelled excitedly. The men at the tape pulled it out straight. "Hold it higher, Jim, you fool," and silence fell then upon the throng. Men bended down trying to pierce the deep gloom with their eyes. From out at the starting point came muffled voices. The crowd swayed and jostled.

The racers did not come. The crowd began to fret, its nerves burning. "O, hurry up," shrilled some one.

The voice called again: "Ready there?" Everybody replied: "Yes, all ready. Hurry up!"

There was more muffled discussion at the starting point. In the crowd a man began to make a proposition. "I'll bet twenty——" but the crowd interrupted with a howl. "Here they come!" The thickly packed body of men swung as if the ground had moved. The men at the tape shouldered madly at their fellows, bawling, "Keep back! Keep back!"

From the distance came the noise of feet pattering furiously. Vague forms flashed into view for an instant. A hoarse roar broke from the crowd. Men bended and swayed and fought. The kids back near the tape exchanged another stolid look. A white form shone forth. It grew like a spectre. Always could be heard the wild patter. A scream broke from the crowd. "By Gawd, its Pop! Pop! Pop's ahead!"

The old man spun towards the tape

like a madman, his chin thrown back, his grey hair flying. His legs moved like oiled machinery. And as he shot forward a howl as from forty cages of wild animals went towards the imperturbable chieftains in bronze. The crowd flung themselves forward. "O, you old Indian! You savage! Did anybody ever see such running?"

"Ain't he a peach! Well!"

"Where's the kids? H-e-y, kids!"

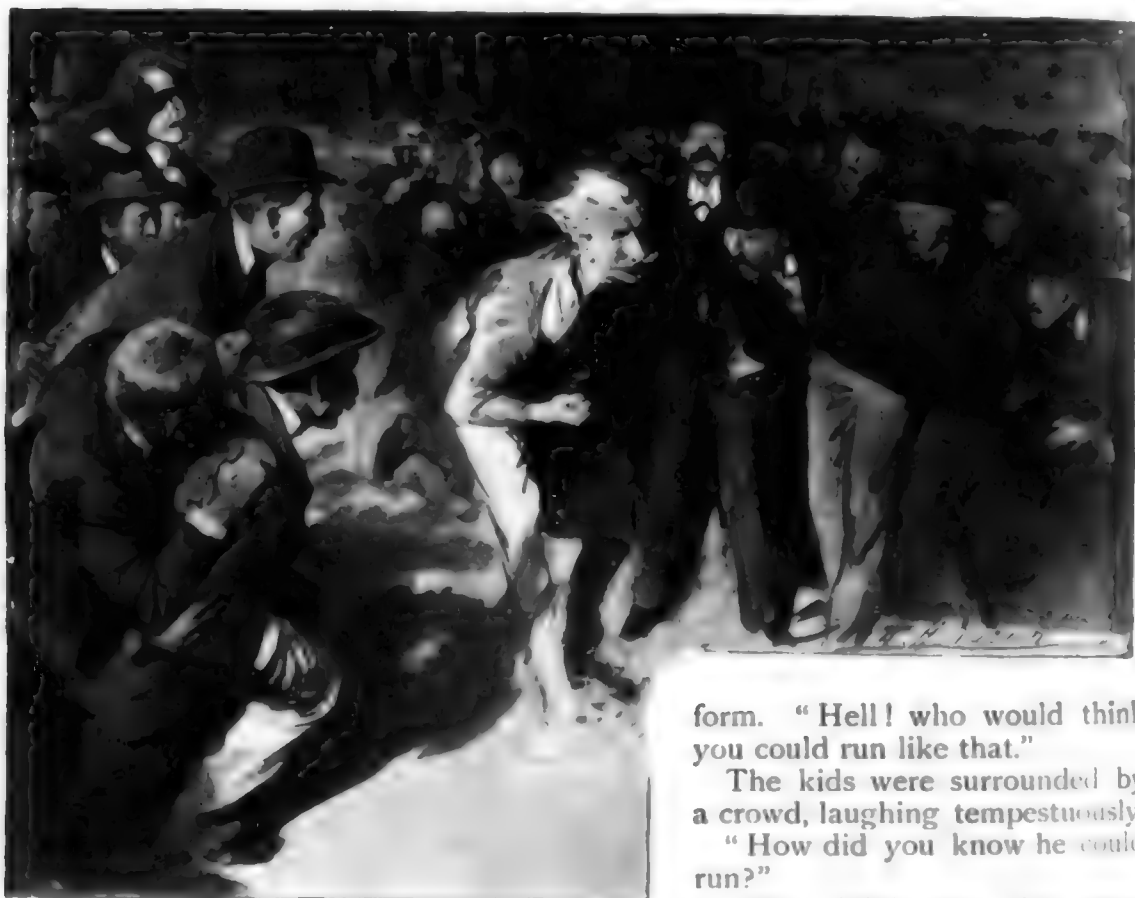
"Look at him, would you? Did you

Freddie falling into the arms of some men, struggled with his breath, and at last managed to stammer:

"Say, can't—can't—that old—old—man run!"

Pop, puffing and heaving, could only gasp: "Where's my shoes? Whose got my shoes?"

Later Freddie scrambled panting through the crowd, and held out his hand. "Good man, Pop!" And then he looked up and down the tall, stout



"THE OLD MAN SPUN TOWARDS THE TAPE LIKE A MADMAN"

ever think?" These cries flew in the air blended in a vast shout of astonishment and laughter.

For an instant the whole tragedy was in view. Freddie, desperate, his teeth shining, his face contorted, whirling along in deadly effort, was twenty feet behind the tall form of old Pop, who, dressed only in his—only in his underclothes—gained with each stride. One grand insane moment, and then Pop had hurled himself against the tape—victor!

form. "Hell! who would think you could run like that."

The kids were surrounded by a crowd, laughing tempestuously.

"How did you know he could run?"

"Why didn't you give me a line on him?"

"Say—great snakes!—you fellows had a nerve to bet on Pop."

"Why, I was cock-sure he couldn't win."

"O, you fellows must have seen him run before."

"Who would ever think it?"

Benson came by, filling the midnight air with curses. They turned to see him.

"What's the matter, Benson?"

"Somebody pinched my handkerchief. I tied it up in that string. Hang it."

The kids laughed blithely. "Why, hello! Benson," they said.

There was a great rush for cabs. Shouting, laughing, wondering, the crowd hustled into their conveyances, and the drivers flogged their horses toward the city again.

"Won't Freddie be crazy! Say, he'll be guyed about this for years."

"But who would ever think that old tank could run so."

One cab had to wait while Pop and Freddie resumed various parts of their clothing.

As they drove home, Freddie said: "Well, Pop, you beat me."

Pop said, "That's all right, old man."

The kids, grinning, said: "How much did you lose, Benson?"

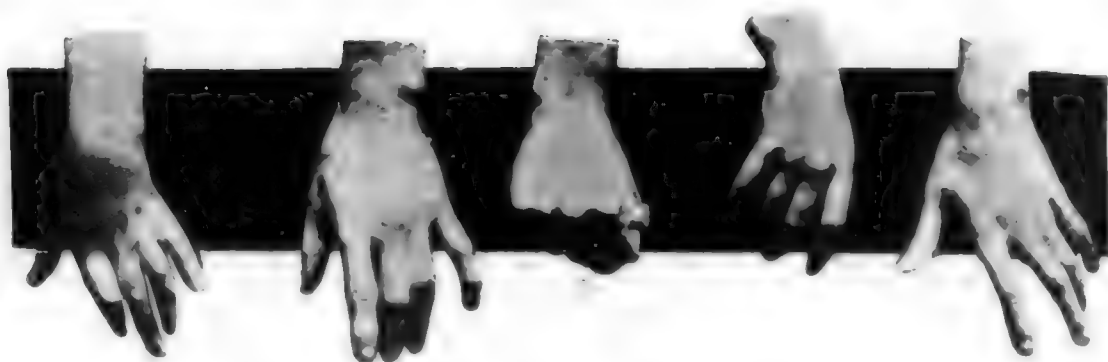
Benson said defiantly: "O, not so much. How much did you win?"

"O, not so much."

Old Colonel Hammigan, squeezed down in a corner, had apparently been reviewing the event in his mind, for he suddenly remarked, "Well, I'm damned!"

They were late in reaching the Café Colorado, but when they did, the bottles were on the bar as thick as pickets on a fence.





Plaster Casts

WRITTEN BY GEORGE BELLINGHAM. ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOS

ENGLISH people are generally accused of lacking that love for art which is so characteristic of southern nations; but the perpetuation of the best statuary in the world, that

in proportion as the original or only a few inches in height.

Naturally, the moulds of the countless statues and busts that one sees at Brucciani's are of great value, as they require the greatest skill and nicety in their making. When a cast of a modern statue is wanted, the second figure that comes from the mould after the casting of the original generally serves as the model, its shape being faithfully taken in plaster of Paris. Any reduction in size is arrived at by a mathematical process of which the actual dimensions are the basis and starting point; the measurements of every cast are very carefully kept, as from time to time those for which there is a large sale wear out and have to be replaced. Outwardly these



MORITA

takes place every day at Brucciani's, under the shadow of Drury Lane, points to a widespread appreciation of the masterpieces of sculpture. The long gallery is crowded with reproductions of the treasures of the British Museum, of the Vatican, and of the museums at Florence and at Naples, and at Paris, Berlin, Munich, and Madrid, in plaster. Whatever may be the size of the original statue or bust, it can be reproduced, by the skill of the caster, larger or smaller as may be desired; and a copy of the glorious Venus de Milo in the Louvre can be bought exactly the same



YOUTH AND AGE

casts look like shapeless pieces of wood with smoothed edges, but hidden in every one of them there are the graceful lines and perfect bodies of some of the most beautiful statues in the world. The outer case is in two pieces, but inside the casts present the appearance of a complicated puzzle, the actual form of the statue or statuette being impressed upon innumerable sections. Seated at a long table in an underground room the operators, apparently, are surrounded by hundreds of shapeless pieces of plaster of Paris; these they put together with remarkable quickness, each section fitting



QUEEN AND PRINCESS OF WALES

close to its neighbour. When, with infinite care, the whole figure has been collected and placed inside the outer mould, the second cover is placed upon the first, and the two are firmly bound together with string. Then the operator proceeds to mix his plaster of Paris, stirring it with water in a basin until the proper consistency is obtained. Having done this and, by carefully stirring, having melted all the lumps, he pours it into a hole in the top of the cast, until the mould is filled. The time required for the plaster to set depends upon the size of the statue or bust, but when it is ready to be withdrawn from the mould, a process requiring extreme delicacy of touch must be gone through. Removing one of the outer covers, and holding the mould firmly

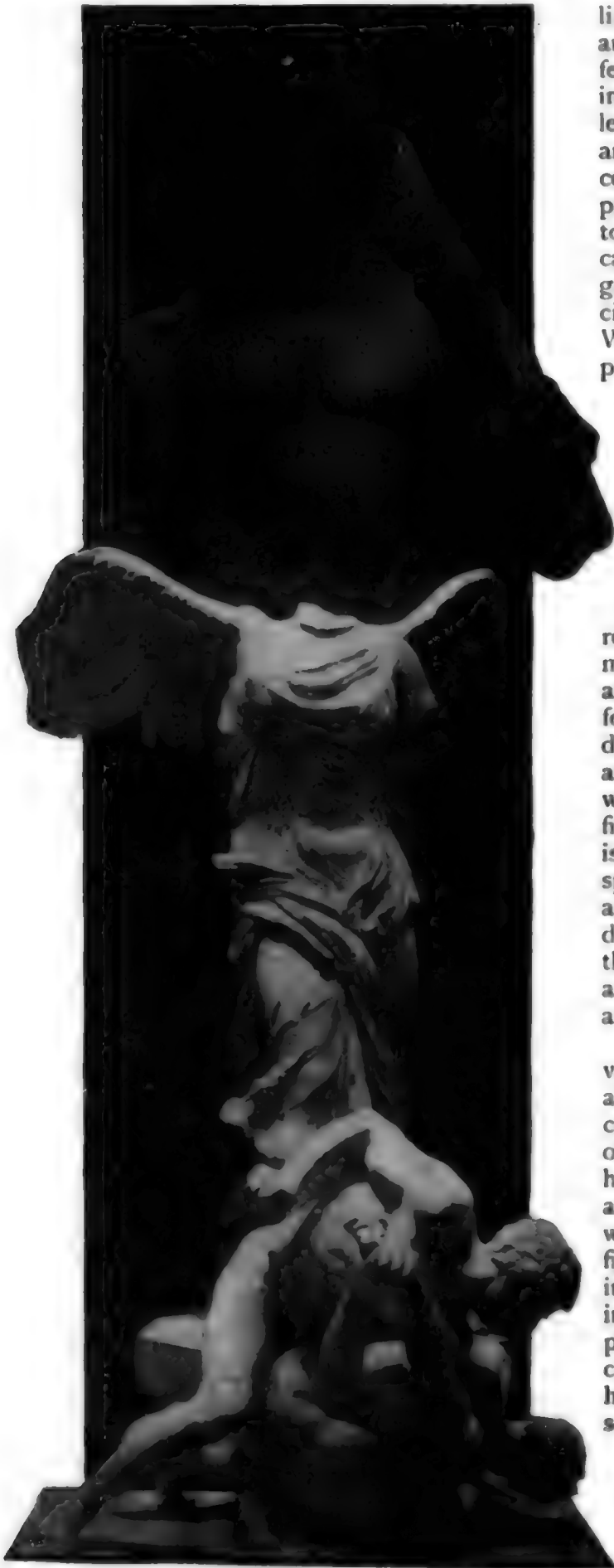


PRINCE OF WALES AND PRINCE CONSORT

with one hand, the workman proceeds to take off the numerous sections one by one, gently forcing them apart with a sharp-pointed tool kept expressly for the purpose. As he works slowly, and as the heap of sections at his side gradually grows larger and larger, the delicate



NAPOLÉON III.
Mask taken after death



HERCULES, VICTORY AND WRESTLERS

limbs of a Venus, the sturdy arms of an Apollo, or the classic features of a Greek statue appear imbedded in gypsum, until at length all the pieces of the mould are removed, and the work is completed. But wherever the pieces of the mould have fitted together, a ridge appears on the cast, as is shown in the photographs of hands, taken by Bruciani from life, that we reproduce. When the casts are required for purely art purposes, such as examples or anatomical specimens in studios or art schools, these ridges are allowed to remain, as they show the various parts of the mould, but for all ordinary purposes the surface of the cast is carefully smoothed and rounded.

Year after year goes on this reproduction of antique and modern statues, of busts, of masks and sections of the face, hands, feet, arms, and legs; of old mural decorations, of fruit, flowers, and vegetables from Nature, as well as of animals and birds, fishes and shells. Plaster of Paris is very perishable and fragile, and speedily becomes ruined by dust and dirt, and every time it is dusted a considerable portion of the surface is removed, and this, as well as the growing love for art, causes the constant demand.

Some moulds are almost as valuable as the original statues, as it is now impossible to take casts of some of the finest works of sculpture in the world. As I have already pointed out, the actual cast as regards modern work is taken from the second figure that comes from the mould into which the bronze is run; in the case of marble statues a plaster cast is taken from the clay figure which the sculptor has himself made, and which serves his marble-cutters as a copy, these men hewing the stone by the most precise mathematical measurements. But with antique statues there are no clay figures, and

all casts must, therefore, be taken from the original. Unfortunately the preparation which the cast-makers must spread over the marble before covering it with plaster in order that their mould can be removed when dry, has been found to possess highly discolouring properties, and to leave effects which may be seen in more than one European museum upon the priceless masterpieces of other ages. For this reason no one is allowed to take fresh casts of a large number of pieces of

or group, the original of which stands in some other museum in the same country, the authorities have to send to England to order the cast from the holders of the mould. The cost of its carriage to Italy is heavy, but this is the only possible way by which some reproductions can be obtained. Some of the moulds consist of hundreds of sections, notably the colossal David by Michael Angelo, which stands in the South Kensington Museum and which was cast by Brucciani



GENERAL VIEW OF GALLERY

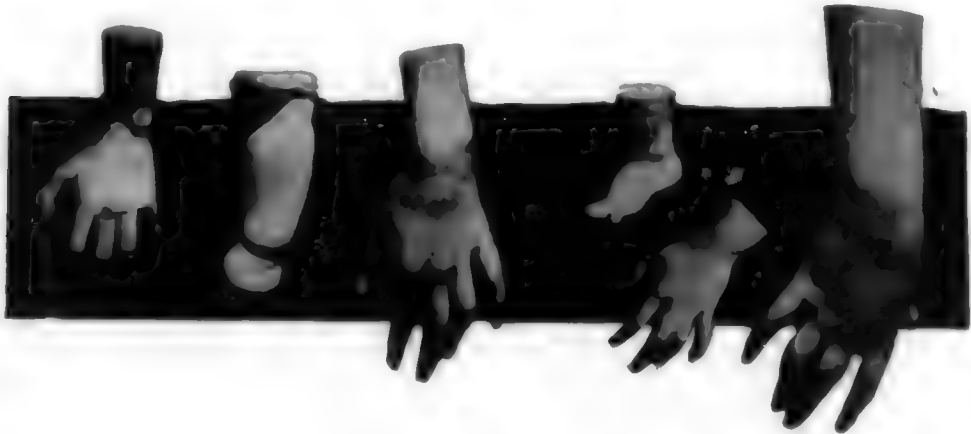
statuary, and naturally those already existing are jealously kept by their owners. A great many of these moulds are in the possession of Italian plaster-cast makers, and when a reproduction is wanted it can only be obtained from the holder. Some are in America, some are in England and other countries, since, as they are valuable commodities, they frequently change hands, and always at increased prices. It occasionally happens that when an Italian museum wishes to have a plaster reproduction of a statue

Plaster-casting is also largely used in reproducing death-masks for the use of sculptors, and our photograph shows the bust of Napoleon III., the face of which was modelled from a mask taken after his death at Chislehurst. A thin layer of warmed wax is laid upon the features, and when it is quite cool it is removed and liquid plaster of Paris is poured upon the inside, the plaster faithfully receiving the impressions made upon the wax. These masks are almost invariably taken of royal personages after death, in order

that their memory may be perpetuated by sculpture.

William Morris, in one of his many papers upon art, urged his readers never to be satisfied with imitations, and told them that when they could not possess an original they should "do without." However truly this advice may apply to

art generally, it does not touch sculpture. Plaster-casting is essentially an imitation, but without its aid we should lack some of the greatest treasures in our museums. Its use to art-students is incalculable, and the cheapness of its results places them within the means of everybody who has the faintest appreciation of beauty.



THE DEAD WIFE

OUT of the wind and out of the rain,
Una, come to my arms again;
Close though your grave-clothes wrap you round,
Come from your chamber underground.

There near your head though the rose root grows,
Out in the free air lifts the rose,
Breathes a sweetness that's like to pain—
Una, come to me once again!

Though you may listen what lilies say
Ere they rise to the summer day,
I can whisper you words more dear,
Living love for my dead to hear.

Deep is your grave, and dark and warm;
Yet I call you through night and storm,
Ghost of my love, through drenching rain,
Una, come to me once again!

Sure you remember as lone you lie,
Once how the short night drifted by,
Light as the shadow of flying hair—
Love, remember, and bide not there.

My door stands open towards the night,
Of hearth and lantern I've quenched the light;
Your old place is of your coming fain—
Una, come to my arms again.

NORA HOPPER.

The Master Criminal

WRITTEN BY FRED M. WHITE ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL HARDY

XI.—THE LOSS OF THE "EASTERN EMPRESS"

CHAPTER I.



GRYDE was dining the Accredited Agent-General of the State of Mimeria at his club. Here Felix Gryde was known as Count Dumaresque, a South American grandee of wealth recently settled in England. For the most part, he surrounded himself with a halo of frosty politeness, which served to keep his fellows at a distance, and prevented the asking of questions. For the rest, he was lean and brown; his buttonhole flaunted the ribbon of some foreign Order.

The Minerian representative was also lean and brown, with a furtive eye and a reputation for dubious veracity. His life was one long battle with the capitalists who regarded Minerian Bonds dubiously. But a liar at once so picturesque and audacious as Don Marcos did not live in vain. At the present moment some twenty millions of British capital were buried in the pocket State, and, like a financial *Oliver Twist*, Don Marcos asked for more.

In desperate need of five millions, he asked for ten, and consequently got two. Things were very bad in the City, and "dilly-dally duck" cared nothing for the Minerian salt Marcos desired to put on his tail. And this was all the more annoying because Mimeria was on the verge of war with the neighbouring "State" of Catagonia over that turtle-fishing business.

Marcos was in despair. His finest romantic flights were spent in Lombard Street in vain. An expert in gold mining had worked at his samples of

the precious ore and asked if they had come via the Cape.

"Over the walnuts and the wine" Marcos became expansive. Count Dumaresque, his fellow-countryman, was duly sympathetic. And the latter betrayed such an astounding knowledge of the tortuous ways of Minerian finance as rendered Don Marcos uneasy.

"I declare I am afraid of you," he muttered.

Dumaresque smiled in the most reassuring manner.

"Positively there is no need," he replied. "I have no need to love my country, as you would say if you knew my story; but as she laid down my fortune for me I am not ungrateful, and I hate the Catagonians."

Marcos started. Really, this wonderful man knew everything.

"You are aware we are at loggerheads there?" he suggested.

"Dear friend, you will be at one another's throats ere two months are past," said Dumaresque, with a wave of his cigarette. "Under existing circumstances the prospect frightens you."

"Another million and I should feel easy enough. We want——"

"A line-of-battle ship," Dumaresque put in. "One big armed cruiser to blockade Inique and you would settle the business in a month."

"*Parbleu*, a wonderful man," Marcos muttered. "Your Excellency has guessed it."

"That is because I have studied the question," said Dumaresque. "A cruiser such as you require would, fully equipped, cost a million. The manning is of no great consequence, nor the officering either for the matter of that. Good

men with an eye to ultimate income will flock round you as a matter of course. What could you put down in cash for a ship such as you require?"

"I took £200,000 with me to Belfast and offered to secure the rest," Marcos responded, almost tearfully, "and they laughed politely in my beard."

Dumaresque lent across the table and dropped his voice to a whisper.

"If I provide you with one of the finest line-of-battle ships afloat," he said, "will you hand over the sum in question to me?"

Marcos smiled; and yet Dumaresque's face was grave enough.

"My noble friend is pleased to jest," Marcos muttered.

"Your noble friend was never more serious in his life," came the response. "You have heard of that new man-o'-war, the *Eastern Empress*?"

The listener's eyes sparkled at the mere suggestion. The *Eastern Empress*, recently launched from Belfast, was the finest belted cruiser afloat. Her triple-expansion engines were wonders, those quick-firing guns were an army corps in themselves, goodness knows what was the resisting power of the armour-plating; whilst on the trial trip even the boiler tubes had failed to leak, which fact in itself marked a new departure in naval engineering.

"Ah, if we only had a ship like that!" Marcos sighed.

Dumaresque's reply was brief but thrilling.

"Guarantee to hand me over £200,000 at the time I may demand it," he said, "and within two months the *Eastern Empress* shall be lying in the mouth of your de la Garde river to do as you please with."

Marcos hastily swallowed another glass of claret. Such an audacious proposal came as a shock to the nerve centres.

"I presume you do not mean to insult me?" he gasped.

"You allude to your sense of honour, doubtless," Dumaresque sneered.

"Bah! the sense I mean is my common sense," Marcos responded promptly. "Such a thing could not be done. Even

if it were possible detection could speedily follow. Otherwise, the £200,000 is your own."

"It has been as good as my own for some time," said Dumaresque. "The thing is easy as easy—when you know how it is done. What my plans are and whence I derived all my information is my own secret. Within three months, two months, the *Eastern Empress* shall be at the mouth of de la Garde. The spot is desolate; there is a good natural harbour there, and with your own engineers specially imported with the necessary appliances to the spot, a few days will alter the *Eastern Empress* beyond recognition. Then you can boldly sail into your chief harbour of San Maza and make up your complement of men and officers."

"Still, there are lions in the path," Marcos suggested. "Where did the ship come from?"

"Let a paragraph go round the papers that an American firm has turned out the cruiser for you. Do this at once. Mention a well-known firm by name—and if it is only for the sake of the advertisement they will never contradict the report."

Marcos wagged his head sagely.

"My faith, but you are a wonderful man!" he said. "O, yes; you shall do as you like, all the more as I run no risk in the matter. Still, there remains one lion, the biggest of the lot. The British lion, what of him?"

"You mean there will be a fuss over the loss of the ship?" Dumaresque smiled in the orthodox Mephistophelian manner. "My friend, there will be no fuss whatever. For months I have laid my plans, and they are absolutely flawless. How the thing is to be managed is my secret for the present. I give you my word that there will be no fuss or bother whatever."

"And as to the rest?"

"As to the rest, two months from to-day you will be at de la Garde with your engineers and workmen. To the hour I shall steam into the harbour. You will come aboard and pay me the £200,000 and provide me with a coaster to take me to San Maza. Is that so?"

Marcos stretched out a lean brown claw eagerly.

"Shake hands upon it," he gurgled. "Providence must have brought us together."

Dumaresque, otherwise Gryde, smiled.

"Heaven helps those who help themselves," he said *sotto*

XXX.

CHAPTER II.

GRYDE'S audacious scheme was by no means the inspiration of a moment. Neither could the main idea be termed altogether novel, since the stealing of barks and luggers has ever been a favourite theme of nautical writers.

But the spiriting away of a line-of-battle ship at the end of the nineteenth century was quite another matter. Like Mark Twain's "Stolen White Elephant," the affair was certain to cause an immense sensation, for big cruisers, unlike big diamonds, cannot be hidden away in a waistcoat pocket.

Under ordinary circumstances, the recovery of the *Eastern Empress* was a certainty. True, this could have mattered little to Gryde, provided he got his money, but at the same time he was too finished an artist in crime to leave a thing to chance in this clumsy way. There had to be exceptions, of course, but he preferred the crime that on the surface appeared no crime at all.

In this case there was to be no sensation. This statement seems absurd on the face of it, but nevertheless Gryde had found a way.

Needless to say, the scheme had entailed a considerable expenditure of time and money, Gryde holding with Walpole that the latter commodity will do any-

thing. Certainly it had unlocked certain of the minor secrets of the Admiralty.

For instance, the golden key supplied the information that some little friction had arisen between this country and Spain as to the pearl-fishing rights in the Eastralian Ocean, where, strange to



"DUMARESQUE SMILED IN THE ORTHODOX MEPHISTOPHELIAN MANNER."

say, Mineria and Catagonia bordered. It was an open secret also that the first commission of the *Eastern Empress* would be for two years in these same waters. This step was intended to serve a dual purpose—to prove to Spain that no nonsense would be entertained, and also to revise the Admiralty charts, which were acknowledged to be defective so far as certain parts of the Eastralian Ocean were concerned.

Gryde's movements were carefully arranged. All that the Admiralty were doing in the matter he knew perfectly well. He knew, for instance, that the

First Lord and the commander of the *Eastern Empress* were discussing certain important matters late on the night following his meeting with Marcos, long after the First Lord's household had gone to bed. Gryde had oral and ocular demonstration of this fact, and he stood outside Sir Dorian Bax's library door in his stocking feet listening to the palaver. This act of burglary was necessary, as will hereafter appear.

A scent of fresh tobacco smoke floated out from the library. Gryde wondered if he might indulge himself, then he abandoned the suggestion. The mixture of pleasure and business rarely leads to satisfactory results.

To overhear and oversee this interview Gryde had remained *perdu* in the Grosvenor Crescent house for two hours. Through the half-opened door he could see Lord Ararat and Captain James Clinton carefully studying a huge chart laid out before them on the table.

"Not altogether satisfactory," said his lordship.

"Well, no," Clinton admitted. "The fact is we want a new survey of this portion of the Eastralian Seas. This Mineria-Catagonia business will be a fine excuse for sounding The Gut without arousing the suspicion of anybody. We are there to protect English interests in case of trouble."

Captain Clinton smiled, and the First Lord smiled also. An eminent cotton-spinner who had made a fortune, and attained a peerage, was just the very man for an enlightened Government to choose as head of the Admiralty. Lord Ararat was profoundly ignorant of everything appertaining to his office, and did no worse for the fact.

"Dangerous place, The Gut, isn't it?" he asked.

Clinton replied in the affirmative. Still, the chart lying on the table there was a reliable one, with all the dangerous rocks and shoals marked upon it. The same had been recently purchased from a scientific Catagonian with a bent for turning his knowledge to account.

"The only place we have to fear," Clinton concluded, "is the Hen and Chickens reef. The currents there are

extremely dangerous. Still, with a chart like this, I fail to see how we can get into trouble. My intention is to go entirely by the chart, taking fresh soundings by the way. In two years the whole thing should be complete."

"You are taking a scientific survey party along?"

"Yes, four of them altogether. Mr. Erenthal is an exceedingly clever German, and his friends are all enthusiasts, I'm told. The thing is somewhat irregular, but I've no doubt we shall find these gentlemen of great assistance."

The listening Gryde smiled. A little while later and he would be playing the part of the distinguished German savant about to become a guest on the *Eastern Empress* in the cause of science. As to the others, they are merely accomplices to be used and discarded at leisure.

Lord Ararat yawned, and looked somewhat pointedly at his watch. The hour was late, and his lordship had been to many functions the same evening. Clinton rose.

"I will not detain you any longer," he said.

"Well, I am tired," the First Lord confessed. "Leave this chart with me till to-morrow; I will show it to Cansford as arranged. You shall have it back before you leave for Portsmouth on Saturday. Good-night."

Clinton took another cigarette and departed. Then the First Lord proceeded to fasten up the house and creep yawningly to bed, having first dropped the Eastralian chart into a drawer under the library table.

Half an hour later Gryde sat at the same piece of furniture carefully examining the chart with the aid of a shaded candle. The chart he compared minutely with several scraps of paper which he produced from his pocket. Then, with a pair of compasses and an ivory scale, he went over the glazed cloth. From his pocket he produced a tiny phial and a camel's-hair pencil. A few strokes with the latter, charged with some of the liquid from the phial, left every portion touched blank. A box of water-colours were next brought into

use, and then an hour's careful work followed. The alterations made were so skilful as to defy detection, but they were ample for Gryde's purpose.

Once dry the chart was replaced in the drawer, and for the present Gryde's

seemed assured. The alterations made in the chart were mere pin points by comparison, but then an inch thereon meant miles of blue water. The work of a few moments was the result of months of steady toil and study. If genius be an



"GRYDE SAT AT THE SAME PIECE OF FURNITURE CAREFULLY EXAMINING THE CHART WITH THE AID OF A SHADED CANDLE"

task was at an end. A few minutes later he stood in the deserted street.

"A pity to leave the door unfastened," he muttered, "because those little things are inartistic. Not that the servants will notice: they will merely conclude that their master came in late and forgot to lock up. And I can safely indulge in a smoke now."

Gryde strolled along the street to his lodgings in an amiable frame of mind; all his plans were complete and success

infinite capacity for taking pains, then veritably Gryde was a genius in his way.

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Two days later Gryde started for Portsmouth to take his place on the *Eastern Empress*. He was altered out of recognition. He had a rotund figure, a profusion of fair hair, and his eyes looked out from rimmed spectacles. In the gaze of the world he was no longer Felix Gryde, but Herr Max Erenthal.

CHAPTER III.

THE latest and most expensive addition to Her Majesty's Navy had been at sea now for some six weeks. The *Eastern Empress* had exceeded the same sanguine estimate formed of her character, and Captain Clinton was serene in the knowledge that he commanded the finest ironclad afloat.

It was a perfect October night, summer in those favoured seas where the breeze came cool and crisp, yet laden with spices and perfumes from the group of islands that fringed the mainland of Mineria, hard against the coastline at the end of which lay the harbour of San Maza. Millions of stars flamed in the deep blue of the arch; on the water lay an arc of lights, the meaning of which those upon the *Eastern Empress* knew perfectly well. They were Catagonian gunboats watching San Maza as a cat watches a mouse.

Clinton, with some of his officers about him, was smoking a cigar on the quarter-deck. Amongst the group was Herr Erenthal. His subordinates were somewhere down in the engine-rooms. Being of a mechanical turn of mind they haunted the engineers.

"Why don't those beggars fight?" Clinton asked. "Those gunboats are enough in themselves to force a declaration of war."

"They wait for their new ship from America, these Minerians," Erenthal smiled. "When she come you will see what you call ructions. And I shall like to see der fun. One gets tired mit all dese dredging and sounding."

"You can take the steam pinnace and go ashore if you like," said Clinton.

Erenthal expressed his thanks. He was just going to ask the same favour, he said. An hour later he was saddling across the quay-head at San Maza looking about him as if quite uncertain of his direction, and yet at the same time there seemed to be a deal of method in his drifting. Quite naturally he found himself at length in a café, and as if the thing were the merest accident in the world, who should be there but Marcos.

"A fine night, my friend," said the latter.

"Fine indeed," Gryde responded. "But you would not have recognised me had I not given you what some people call the office. You have seen the ship?"

"Ay, indeed. If she were only ours! Those gunboats! Well, if you are successful we will make short work of them."

"I am always successful," Gryde said calmly. "Three days from now the *Eastern Empress* will sail into de la Guardé. All your men are ready?"

"They are now waiting with all appliances."

"Good. I leave it to your people to alter the *Eastern Empress* beyond recognition. The thing is nothing like so difficult as it would appear. There is another thing to which I would direct your earnest attention. About the same time that my prize arrives at de la Guardé the complement of an English man-o'-war will reach San Maza—in boats. They must be got away at once: plead the disturbed state of the country or what you will. Because, if they should happen to be still there when your fine cruiser arrives——"

And Gryde paused significantly. Marcos nodded.

"I am obliged to you," he said; "it shall be done. Is there any more?"

"A little thing—a mere trifle," Gryde replied. "When you board the *Eastern Empress* and hand me over that money, you will find my four accomplices on board. Whilst I go on to San Maza with the coaster you have for me, they will remain to enjoy your hospitality for a day or two. If anything happens to them in the meantime I will try and put up with the loss with fortitude."

"Dead men tell no tales," Marcos whispered.

"I never heard of one who did," Gryde said drily; "neither do they ever cause trouble as to their share of the plunder."

The two men exchanged significant glances and Gryde rose from his seat. He lapsed quite naturally into his rolling gait again; he looked the amiable

absent-minded savant to the life. San Maza was a charming place, he informed Captain Clinton a little time later.

"Sorry not to have seen it," said the latter.

"Perhaps you may yet." Gryde smiled. "One never can tell. Pouf, I must now to my cabin to write up those soundings. I wonder where my fellows are."

As it happened the confederates were in the cabin awaiting the chief. As he closed the door they looked towards him eagerly.

"You have news for us," one of them asked.

"Yes, I have news," Gryde whispered. "I have at length all the information about the tides that I require. An intelligent native yonder told me everything. On Wednesday night at ten we shall be on the edge of the Hen and Chickens reef. I have arranged all that very nicely with the Captain. There will be no moon, and it will be pitch dark for some hours afterwards. At eleven o'clock on the night in question you will all be at your posts down below. There will be no need for me to give you the signal, you will *feel* it. If all goes well, a few hours later will see you worth £10,000 apiece."

The listeners smiled: the prospect was an exceedingly pleasant one.

"It all depends upon you now," Gryde proceeded. "The ship is steering by the chart, as these people think, a degree or so to the south of the reef. As you know perfectly well, we are steering right on to it. When you feel the first shock, you will know exactly what to do. That water balance must be shifted as

arranged to convey the idea that the vessel is filling, and thus increase the confusion. This course will also lighten the ship by the head, and enable her to float."

"Yes, but will she float?" a listener asked.



"HE LOOKED THE AMIABLE,
ABSENT-MINDED SAVANT TO
THE LIFE"

"Naturally. The reef we shall strike upon will be the softest coral, and we shall run aground at dead low water. An hour later and we shall be off. By this time the ship's complement will have taken to the boats, and we shall be left on board. With fair weather, it's hard if four practical engineers like you cannot

navigate this boat the hundred odd miles to de la Garde. And long before daylight the ship's crew will be hull down behind the horizon."

With perfect confidence in his scheme, and his ability to carry it out, Gryde dismissed his confederates, and retired to rest. Next morning showed the coast of Mineria, a faint blue streak upon the weather bow, and the whole of that day Gryde was busy with her soundings.

The succeeding day worked slowly out, and night fell at length like a black cloud out of nothingness. Till nearly ten o'clock Gryde was busy in his cabin, and then he crept up on deck, as if desiring not to be noticed.

His gait had lost its roll, his step was lithe and elastic as that of a cat. He crept from place to place, avoiding the lanes of light left by the ship's lanterns, and crouching in the shadows.

Presently he gained the coign of vantage he required—the shadow of the wheel-house. A calm and balmy night, with a clear seaboard, the watch were half sleeping on the deck. Not a single officer was to be seen. Gryde peeped at his watch, and saw that the hour had come.

Where the *Eastern Empress* was on that placid sea he knew to an inch, and the knowledge was not without its meed of anxiety. The ship was listing away a little to the south; a space longer, and the reef would be missed. The carelessness or ignorance of the steersman was wrecking Gryde's plans.

He shut his teeth close together. Like a shadow he slid into the wheel-house. Something long and bright came from his pocket: it flashed high in the air, and then crashed at some soft substance.

Pierced to the heart by the unerring sweep of Gryde's blade, the steersman collapsed upon the floor with one long sigh, and then all was still. The die was cast now; this rash step had become absolutely necessary. Gryde laid his hand upon the powerful yet delicate machinery, and altered the ship's course almost imperceptibly. Still, it was sufficient for his purpose.

"That's the worst of having a lot of fools to deal with," he muttered. "When

you have to rely upon anyone else, it always upsets your plans. A risk of this kind should have been absolutely unnecessary."

Cool as he was, Gryde was conscious of the blood singing in his ears. Left alone for five minutes, he knew that he was safe. But already there were steps coming in his direction. It became a mere matter of seconds. Would it become necessary to take a second life, Gryde wondered, and were they never going to strike—

A hand was laid on the door of the wheel-house. Gryde was preparing to spring forward, when the *Eastern Empress* gave a shiver and groan from end to end like some gigantic creature in mortal agony. Then there followed a tremendous crashing and grinding, and the cruiser was still.

A yell of triumph rose to Gryde's lips, but he suppressed the desire. All the same, it is doubtful as to whether or not it would have been heard, for already hundreds of feet were trampling the decks.

As if to increase the horror of the situation, there followed a loud report from below, and then the sound of water as if pouring ton after ton into the hold of the doomed vessel. Almost immediately she began to sink by the stern.

"Get out the boats!" came the stern command. "Steady there! Plenty of time if you fellows only keep your heads."

Gryde watched everything from the seclusion of the wheel-house. The crew worked as steadily and as orderly as if on parade. In a remarkably short space of time the last boat was lowered and manned.

Gryde and his confederates had the *Eastern Empress* to themselves. All the same, it was some time before they dared to move, and then one by one the lights were put out and the ship plunged into darkness. Down in the engine-room Gryde found his grimy, perspiring assistants.

"Remarkably well done," he said, approvingly. "That explosion and the rush of water finished the business off dramatically. When the tide rises, the



"GRYDE LAID HIS HAND ON THE POWERFUL, YET DELICATE MACHINERY, AND ALTERED THE SHIP'S COURSE"

water-ballast will find its way back again quite naturally, and all we shall have to do is to steer by the chart—*our* chart, of course."

"But *will* she float?" one of the confederates asked.

"As sure as you will some day be hanged," Gryde responded pleasantly. "Can't you feel her swinging at the bows already? One of you go up to the wheel-house with some sacking and a shot or two. You'll find a body there to dispose of. That fool of a steersman didn't know his business, and I had to— Mind you clear everything up."

Higher and higher rose the tide and more buoyant became the *Eastern Empress*. Finally, she rose like a thing of life. It was two o'clock before Gryde gave the signal. There was a stern triumph in his eyes.

"Start the engines again," he said curtly. "By noon to-morrow we shall be ready for them off de la Garde."

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Three days later, at about the same time that the news of the total loss of the *Eastern Empress* reached England, her ship's company, intact save one missing man, were leaving Mineria by a special steamer chartered for them out of courtesy by the Government of the country. The steamer contained one passenger besides, a boasting, inquisitive Yankee, who speedily rendered himself so objectionable as to be tabooed by the rest of the little colony. But the Yankee bore it all philosophically.

"A very good disguise," he told himself, as his cab rolled out of the dock gates a few weeks later. I wonder what those fellows, particularly Clinton, would have said if he'd known the bounder, 'Ezra P. Stanton' and 'Max Erenthal' were one and the same? And I wonder if ever they will discover the trick played upon them? In any case it can't make any difference to me. My dead men will tell no tales."

HEROES OF THE ~ FIRE ~ BRIGADE

ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOS

THE heroism of our Fire Brigade is a byword; but the object of this article is to give the portraits of those men who have earned for themselves the coveted honour of the



AMBROSE LESTER

silver medal for conspicuous gallantry in saving human life at fires.

This medal may well be termed the Victoria Cross of the Fire Brigade, for when earned the action that has gained it would compare favourably with the bravest deeds on land or sea. In addition to the portraits of our living heroes, no article on the Fire Brigade would be complete without the portrait of that brave and gallant fireman, William Godfrey Jacobs. A plain, unvarnished official report will be found beneath his portrait, but the golden halo of



D. J. RICE

D. WALL

brave self-sacrifice shines through the meagre details. A photograph of the remains of Jacobs' uniform are also given here: all that was left of the fine, big, brave man we see in the portrait.

"The Helmets of Heroes" speak for their departed wearers' dangers in an eloquent manner. There are three cases of these helmets, some battered right out of shape, which are kept in memory of the brave men who wore them and, in many cases, died in them, in the heroic execution of their dangerous duty. When the Duke of York visited the headquarters he spent quite a long time in front of these cases, which are indeed enough to make anyone pause and reflect.

With the exception of one or two, the brief story of how the medal was won is told by the men themselves with a straightforward rugged effectiveness, combined with modesty, which invariably



J. WAINWRIGHT



W. T. EMANUEL

accompanies the narrative of a brave man's deed.



W. G. JACOBS

WILLIAM GODFREY JACOBS.

On September 12th, 1889, a call was received at the Wandsworth Fire Brigade Station to a fire on the premises of Messrs. Burroughs and Wellcome, manufacturing chemists, at Dormay Wharf, Bell Lane, Wandsworth.

The manual engine and five men attended, quickly followed by a steam fire-engine from the Battersea Fire-engine Station. The firemen found on their arrival that it was a manufacturing chemists of three floors, the third floor well alight.

The officer in charge ordered a stand-pipe to be got to work, and Jacobs, with a comrade named Charles W. Ashby, took the branch upstairs to the seat of the fire, shortly after which an explosion was heard, and it was found that the two men were cut off by the flames from escape.

Their comrades immediately got four lengths of scaling ladders shipped, but found they would not reach to the third floor. In the

meantime two builder's ladders had been procured, and they proceeded to lash them together, and, with help from the people around, raised them at the end of the building; these were, however, about five feet too short to reach the windows, and at the same time Ashby was seen struggling through the swing sash of the iron-framed window, and Jacobs helping to push him through.

Fourth-class fireman Mark Francis immediately ran up the ladders and caught Ashby by the legs, guiding him until he could get a hold of the ladders: while doing this Jacobs was seen to fall back from the window overpowered by smoke and fire, and was not seen again alive. Francis again ascended the ladders, but could not see anything of Jacobs. Ashby, who was severely burned, was removed to the infirmary.

The sashes of the window were of cast iron, and Jacobs being a large, heavy man could not have got through the swinging pane, and he evidently intended after he had helped Ashby through to have tried to break them away with his



THE REMAINS OF JACOBS' UNIFORM

axe, as it was found after the fire was extinguished close to his body; but the smoke and flame were too rapid for him, and he was overpowered and burned to death.

Jacobs was twenty-seven years of age, unmarried, a native of Jersey. By his death the Brigade lost a good servant, and the fireman a valuable comrade.



S. T. PIPE



G. W. BYRNE

He was buried with all honours in the Fireman's Grave at Highgate Cemetery.

AMBROSE LESTER.

Mr. Lester gained his silver medal at a fire which took place at Mr. Whiteley's premises in Bayswater on August 6th, 1887. Mr. Lester performed a most meritorious and courageous act by which he saved the life of a comrade at imminent risk of his own. Mr. Lester and Fireman James Brown had been working with a branch inside the building when a heavy fall occurred, and they had to make a precipitate retreat. Lester got out, but found that Brown was not with him, and, although severely burned, and otherwise bruised and injured, he at once returned, and was just in time to rescue his comrade from immediate and certain death.

DAVID JOSEPH RICE.

Mr. Rice, who is now in charge of the Pimlico Pier Fire Station, earned his medal under the following circumstances: Whilst on escape duty at Knightsbridge Green he received a call

to High Road, Knightsbridge. The house was already well alight. Mr. Rice was informed that there were people in the house, and pitched his escape at the first-floor window and entered the room. The flames were showing through the floor and twisting through the door. He discovered a man in the room, insensible. After a severe struggle, owing to the tremendous heat and smoke and the heavy weight of the man (seventeen stone), Mr. Rice managed to get his unconscious burden to the escape and in the shoot. By this time the house was almost entirely enveloped in flames, but being informed by the crowd that there were still more inmates inside, Mr. Rice again ascended the escape and searched the upper part, but discovered that the two sons had made their escape through the skylight to the next roof. They were severely burned, a part of

their clothing being completely burnt off them. In addition to the silver medal, Mr. Rice has this year received from the hands of the Duchess of York the Good Service medal for faithful and conscientious discharge of duty.

DAVID WALL.

Mr. Wall joined the Fire Brigade in August, 1874, and was awarded the silver medal for saving life at a fire in Hackney Road, Shoreditch, on May 16th, 1881. It was while stationed at Whitechapel that a call to a fire was received at the above-named place, and on arriving there they found a shop well alight, and a woman calling out for someone to rescue her child which was in the front room on the third floor. A fire-escape was already pitched at the window, and the flames were coming from the shop all round it. Several firemen had attempted to enter, but were driven back by the suffocating smoke. As the woman continued screaming for someone to save her child, Mr. Wall determined to try, so ran up the ladder and entered the room, but

the smoke was so suffocating that he was obliged to hold his breath. He failed to reach the bed, but tried again; but this time, although, owing to the density of the smoke, he was obliged to feel his way, he managed to reach the child and brought it to the window. As he looked down it appeared like a sea of faces turned in one direction, and as he made his way down the escape the cheering could be heard a long way off. The doctor was sent for, and the child soon recovered, for fortunately the bed-clothes had got round the face and acted as a respirator, and so averted the calamity which must otherwise have happened. In addition to receiving the silver medal for this gallant act, Mr. Wall has been commended several times, and has had a great number of narrow escapes while at fires.

JOSEPH WAINWRIGHT.

On the night of May 26th, 1896, Mr. Wainwright and two others—viz., Mr. S. J. Abbott and Mr. John Sinclair—were on duty at the street station in Farringdon Street, City, when, shortly after midnight, they were called by some strangers to the ground floor of Harris's sausage shop alight opposite the station. After sending the call by telephone to Watling Street Station they at once attended, Abbott bringing the fire-escape, whilst Sinclair and Wainwright, being less encumbered, reached the shop first, and knowing there were people inside, at once burst open the street door. The shop was well alight, but they managed to get up the staircase, and closed the doors after them to keep the fire confined to the shop as long as possible. They then broke open the

doors of all the rooms on the first and second floors, but found no one there. But the noise they made was sufficient to alarm the two men who were sleeping on the third floor, and they met one of them on the stairs coming down to see what was the matter as they went up. By this time the shop and staircase were too far gone for them to get down that way, and about the same time the plate-glass front of the shop fell out, and the flames shot up the front of the building, which was covered with match-boarding, and was well alight by the time they got to the front windows.

Abbott, who had found it impossible to get into the shop, had fetched his escape to the windows. Although the



THE HELMETS OF HEROES

flames were licking the escape and the wirework on the escape was soon red-hot, they got the two men on the escape and sent them down. Mr. Sinclair followed, and Mr. Wainwright came last.

All four of them were more or less burnt about the hands and face. Mr. Sinclair was some weeks in the hospital, but Mr. Wainwright was more fortunate, and was all right again in a week or so. Both Mr. Wainwright and Mr. Sinclair received the silver medal as the reward for their bravery on this occasion.

WILLIAM T. EMANUEL.

Mr. Emanuel was on duty with a fire-escape at Long Acre in September, 1880, when, between the hours of twelve and one o'clock a.m., a call was received to a house alight in a turning off Drury Lane. Upon arriving at the scene of the fire, two lodging-houses, both adjoining and communicating, were found to be well alight. The escape was fixed against the burning building, and Mr. Emanuel went up to search for some of the inmates, who he was informed were still in the place. He entered the building through a second-floor window to make his search, but this was a very difficult matter owing to the dense smoke and great heat. Groping his way through the smoke, he came across a child about five years of age, a woman about sixty years, and a man about sixty-two years old, who were in a partially suffocated condition. The child was rescued first, then the woman, and then the man. He again ascended the escape and entered the building. The flames were now roaring terribly up the staircase and through the back rooms, and all hope of saving others, if they were there, was quite hopeless. Through the dense smoke he could now see the fire glittering through the fire boards, and the flooring itself was becoming very shaky; he himself was much exhausted through the exertion of carrying people down and being among the great heat and smoke. He then made his way to the window guided by the life-line from the escape, which he had had the precaution to take with him, or else he would not in all probability have been able to find his way out. Arriving at the window, he heard one of the crowd crying out that there were people at the back of the premises. Immediately, Mr. Emanuel ran round through a narrow

court with his smaller ladders, and at the back of the burning building rescued an old soldier aged about seventy-three years, who stood when upright over 6 feet. He was paralysed, and very much burnt. Mr. Emanuel passed him over the yard wall at the side of the court, after which he was taken to Charing Cross Hospital, where he eventually recovered. Again Mr. Emanuel endeavoured to enter the now blazing tenement, but it was then impossible, as the whole of the two buildings were enveloped in flames. Great difficulty was experienced in rescuing these people, owing to their age and the helpless condition they were in. After the fire was extinguished, the charred bodies of two persons were found among the ruins.

SAMUEL T. PIPE.

On March 19th, 1881, while on duty with a Whitechapel fire-escape, Mr. Pipe received a call about 9.30 p.m. to a fire in Great Prescott Street, Goodman's Fields. When he arrived with the escape he found it was a private house of ten rooms, and the fire was already well advanced, the flames coming out of all the windows. He was told that one of the inmates was still in the house. Seeing that an entrance could not be made in the front part of the building, he went to the back, and by means of a high wall reached the first-floor window. As soon as he had done so, he heard moaning sounds from the interior. Dense smoke and heat was coming out of the window, but he managed to get in, and crawled across the floor, when he found a man lying down unconscious. With great difficulty he got him to the window, as he clutched a chair in one hand, which Mr. Pipe had to wrench from him. By this time the engine arrived, and he was helped down the ladder which another fireman had planted against the window. The man whom Mr. Pipe so bravely rescued from death's door was taken to a doctor's close by, and with great difficulty, and after some time, was restored. For this rescue Mr. Pipe received the silver medal, which was presented to him by Sir McGarel-Hogg, Chairman of the Metropolitan

Board of Works. Mr. Pipe also received a Good Service medal (awarded by the London County Council) from the hands of H.R.H. the Duchess of Teck, on July 6th, 1895.

GEORGE W. BYNE.

Mr. Byne, after a life of stirring adventure, left the sea and came to London and joined the Metropolitan Fire Brigade in April, 1890. At a fire which occurred at No. 38, Egerton Gardens, Knightsbridge, on May 23rd, 1891, three lives were lost, and one was saved by Mr. Byne under the following circumstances: When Mr. Byne arrived with his escape from the Fire Brigade Station at Knightsbridge, the house was well alight and a woman was calling for help at the front window on the third

floor. He placed his machine in position and ascended and rescued the woman, the flames coming out of the second floor window very fiercely and scorching the escape at the time, and when he reached the ground it was found that the woman's legs and Byne's hands were badly burned. In spite of his condition Byne again tried to ascend and search the building, but was unable to do so. For this meritorious action the silver medal for conspicuous bravery at fires was awarded Mr. Byne by the London County Council.

The photographs are by A. J. Bailey, J. Cole, W. H. Faron, Forest Gate Studio, H. Greene, A. L. Jarchy, London and Provincial Photographic Company, and the Mansion House Photographic Company.





WRITTEN BY J. A. FLYNN ILLUSTRATED BY J. MACFARLANE

IT had been raining softly all day, and in the evening the wind got up and drove the showers upon the windows in intermittent bursts. I was tired of tossing upon my pillows, and wondering if the headache would ever cease, tired of closing my ears to the plashing upon the ledges and the pattering at the panes. So I closed my eyes wearily and listened to the voice of the rain, with its message from the departed. O, the foolishness of man, who thinks that he can forget! There comes a sound, a perfume, a word, a song, and the past springs upon him out of the dark.

There was an afternoon, said the voice, autumns ago, when she met me in the rain. We stood where a big tree sheltered us with its withering leaves, and laughed at the showers that fell suddenly from the branches above.

"I scarcely thought you would come, Lorry," I said, "so I am especially glad to see you."

She shook the wet from her golf cap and smiled.

"Did you think that rain, or fire, or

anything, would keep me from trying to get what I wanted? Obstinate me!" she rejoined in her soft, rippling voice.

"And you wanted me?"

I bent over her, and she looked up with her eyes dancing.

"Why, yes, I suppose so, you solemn old dear."

"And you mean to keep me?" We quarrelled so often.

She looked up at me with big eyes and serious. "Ah! I don't know. You see I am a creature of fancies and moods. You will probably lose all patience with me at last. O yes, you will—it's no use shaking your head. 'Some things in life are too important to make game of, Laura,' she quoted, mimicking my gravest manner. 'It would be well if you realised this.' You will say something of that kind again, you know."

"And then?"

"We shall quarrel."

"Seriously?"

"Seriously."

"And afterwards?"

"You will console yourself with your books. I *hate* your books. There!"

"And you will console yourself with someone else." My voice was bitter. It is my way to take things seriously.

"With someone who can laugh! But"—she laid her hand upon my arm—"you needn't be cross this afternoon, when I am so nice and good."

So I took her little hands in mine and drew her to me; and kissed her wet cheeks and eyes and made much of her.

"If it would only rain always!" she cried passionately. "If it would thunder, and lighten, and snow, and hail, just to try and part us! Then I should be sure to come, and we shouldn't quarrel any more. O, Harry, there are plenty of better fair-weather sweethearts; but I should be truest in a storm. If ever we quarrel badly, ask me to come when it blows and rains—when you are in trouble, my dear—and I shall come!"

Ah! little Lorry, it was a winning way that you had—such a very winning way. But you were wilful, and I was obstinate. You tried me too far, my dear. It was a mistake, everyone said, our engagement. And we ended it, which was the cruellest mistake of all.

There was another time, said the voice, when I came a thousand miles through storm and rain; when I reached her house, with the rain dripping from my face, the blinds were drawn down.

"I understand," I said, quietly, holding on to the side of the door. "Let me see her;" and I staggered up the stairs.

There was a smile upon her face, as if her eyes would open soon, and she would laugh and tease. Her hands were folded across her breast, and there was a toy ring hidden in her bosom that I had given her when she was a child. "She wished it," someone sobbed, supporting me a little. They were to give me her kindest regards, if I seemed grieved, they said; and her "very, very best love," if I was terribly sorry and sad.

Then there were a few months of grief that was almost madness; a few years of sorrow; and at last they told me that I must forget. And sometimes I thought that I had forgotten.

"Ask me to come when it blows and

rains." To-night it blew and rained, but Lorry was beyond call. "No!" thundered the rain at the windows, with a crash that shook the panes. "No!" shrieked the wind, with sudden passion. I opened my eyes and sat up on the couch. My face in the mirror looked drawn and white, and slowly smiled a compassionate smile. "I am growing delirious," I murmured impatiently, as I walked to the window and opened it. The rain beat upon my upturned face, and the wind blew the light curtains upon me with a rush, as it were her dress. No; there was nothing—only dark. I closed the window with a sigh, and went back to the couch, for it seemed that I could sleep. The rain-drops on my cheeks were the touch of her lips, methought, and her cool fingers were closing my weary eyelids. The rain upon the windows pattered the words of a little song which she had written in one of her eerie moods:

THE SORROWFUL WAY.

*Love that is born of the sun,
Love that is fire and light
Dies when the day is done—
Long is the love of the night!*

*Love of the summer noon still,
Love of the zephyr warm
Flies when the winds blow chill—
Give me the love of the storm!*

*List! there are tears in the rain;
Hidden the skies above.
Calling, I call in vain—
Faithless—my summer love!*

"O, Lorry, I do not forget," I tried to call; but something—was it a hand?—closed my lips. Surely she had come in the wind and rain to sing me to sleep? I could feel my heavy eyes smiling, and my arm slipping heedlessly from my breast on to the couch—or was it her dress? "Lorry," I cried softly; or, perhaps, only thought, for my voice had no sound. "Lorry!"

Then the headache went, and I opened my eyes upon a dim room—if it were a room—and felt no surprise that she sat by my side, with her face smiling and her lips quivering a little, as I had



"SURELY SHE HAD COME IN THE WIND AND RAIN TO SING ME TO SLEEP?"

seen her so often. She shook the rain carelessly from her dripping garments, and bent quickly over me between laughing and crying, which was always her way.

"Why did you not call me before?" she asked impatiently—it was wonderful how little she had changed! "Did I not tell you I would come?"

I tried to speak, but my voice failed me, and she shook her head.

"You must not speak," she said. "because you are asleep. To-morrow you will think it was a dream. Dear boy"—she laid her hand caressingly upon my head—"it is *not* a dream."

Then she smiled at me, and I smiled at her, and we looked at one another for a long, long time, so that there was no need of words. Only once, when the rain came with a sudden burst, I thought

she heard a voice calling, and half roused, fearing that she might leave me.

"Rest, dear," she said softly, "rest, or I must go. Rest, because it is a dream, you will think to-morrow." Then she laughed her old, quick laugh. "Dear boy," she said again, "it is not a dream." My eyes questioned eagerly.

"You cannot understand, my dear," she murmured, "though you are so much cleverer than I. But some day I shall be the first to tell you. I am waiting for you. You know I am waiting, dear?"

Her face was radiant, and my lips framed a vow that I would be true. There came no sound, but she understood.

"Of course, dear," she said, simply. "Of course, we were always true; always must be true. That is why—ah! some day you will understand!" She bent lovingly down and kissed me, and I smiled.

Again the wind and the rain clamoured at the window, and she looked up and nodded in her old, impulsive way.

"I must go," she said, "but sometimes

I shall come again in the rain. You will listen, dear, and know. You will remember when it beats and drives that I am *there* waiting."

"But in the sunshine?" The words burst from my lips, and in an instant the dark sprang upon me, and I clasped her wildly in my arms, and drew her face to mine. Her tears fell over me, but her voice was happy when she spoke.

"In the sunshine—always—everywhere—I shall be waiting. Ô, my love!" Then the darkness swam round and she was gone.

• • • • •

When I woke upon the couch, the light was streaming in across the rugs with which they had covered me as I slept. The headache and the rain had gone; and as I opened my eyes a sunbeam slid swiftly from my pillow and vanished; and I sat up with a contented smile. For I knew that, in rain or shine, she was watching; and my heart was strong.



The Most Famous Criminal Court

AT THE OLD BAILEY

WRITTEN BY FREDERICK DOLMAN. ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. BROWNE

IT is more than sixty years since what the late Serjeant Robinson termed "the more euphonious name" of the Central Criminal Court was bestowed by Act of Parliament on the dread tribunal of the Old Bailey. But the ancient name lingers in popular usage, and I have heard a man in the street repudiate all knowledge of the Central Criminal Court and then readily inform his interlocutor of the whereabouts of the Old Bailey. The old name is, indeed, so very old. Probably nothing more strikingly illustrates the ancient stability of the City of London than that its principal court of justice should have occupied the same site for a period beyond the oldest record. In the absence of anything like proof, the antiquarians have had to hazard various guesses as to the origin of the name. The balance of probability appears to be divided between two. If we accept the first, Old Bailey is "a corrupt of Bail-hill, that is the place of trial for prisoners by the bailiff—as we still retain the name of the Bail Dock for a certain part of this Court in which the malefactors are confined till called up for trial." According to the other hypothesis the name is derived from "the Ballium," or outer walled court, which is believed to have stood here as part of the city walls.

No part of the present building is older than 120 years. The Old Court in which, being the largest of the four, the most important cases are still tried, was built between 1770 and 1780. Until that time the court-house was a veritable death-trap during the prevalence of "gaol fever" in the adjoining Newgate. In 1750, the Lord Mayor, two judges, an alderman, and a number of jurymen and witnesses were attacked by the

pestilence and died in a few days. Twenty years later a similar holocaust occurred, and then the authorities tardily decided on the demolition of the pestilential building, and the erection in its place of a new Court with better regard for sanitation and health. It was enlarged early in the century. The new Court was built on the passing of the Act which in 1834 gave to the Old Bailey the name of the Central Criminal Court, and extended its jurisdiction to the whole of the metropolis, and such distant places as Wood Green and Woolwich. The Third and Fourth Courts have been added since to provide for the crime of a greatly increased population.

Architecturally the Old Bailey is certainly not worthy of its widespread fame. The dingy walls, the mean-looking doors, the narrow, gloomy staircases may be in accordance with the sordidness of crime, but they hardly suggest the majesty of the law or the greatness of the city under whose auspices it is administered. For years past the members of the Old Bailey Bar, and others frequenting the Central Criminal Court, have been asserting that the time has come for a building whose size and design shall not fall short of the importance and dignity of the work performed within its walls. However, it must be admitted that the arrangements in the Courts have been made as far as they could be with a view to economy of space and the general convenience—comparing favourably in this respect with some of the Courts in the palace at Temple Bar. The Bench, the jury, the barristers, the witnesses, the reporters, and the prisoners are all so placed that they can hear and see without difficulty everything which is said and done. But with the exception

of the old Court, all the Courts are absurdly small, and this is quite inadequate for the proper accommodation of the people legitimately interested in a case of the first importance.

The Bench at the Central Criminal Court consists of the Lord Mayor, the Lord Chancellor, the judges, the aldermen, the Recorder, and the Common Serjeant of London—this being the order of the Act of Parliament. It

jeant, City Pleaders, and occasionally a few members of the Bar. There were in reality two dinners, one at three o'clock for the civic judges, another at five o'clock for the superior judges whom the Recorder and Common Serjeant then relieved, the Central Criminal Court at that time often sitting far into the night. Serjeant Robinson, Serjeant Ballantine, and Mr. Montagu Williams, in their reminiscences, had much to say



NEWGATE

need not be said that the two first-named never put in an appearance at the Old Bailey, but the aldermen frequently adorn the Bench by their presence, their rich robes giving a welcome relief to the dingy Court. There was a time when they were induced to attend by what might have been a stronger sense than that of duty. The Sheriffs, who are responsible for the general arrangements at the Old Bailey sittings, used to give a dinner every day to the judges and aldermen in attendance, the Recorder, the Common Ser-

jeant, City Pleaders, and occasionally a few members of the Bar. There were in reality two dinners, one at three o'clock for the civic judges, another at five o'clock for the superior judges whom the Recorder and Common Serjeant then relieved, the Central Criminal Court at that time often sitting far into the night. Serjeant Robinson, Serjeant Ballantine, and Mr. Montagu Williams, in their reminiscences, had much to say

concerning these civic feasts and the unfortunate consequences they sometimes had upon the occupants of the Bench. It is said that some of the aldermen and barristers, not being obliged to return to the Court, would partake of both repasts!

As a rule, a judge of the High Court is to be found only in the Old Court at the Old Bailey trying a case of murder, or one in which an exceptionally important point of law is involved. It is this Court which has been the scene of all the more famous trials at the Old Bailey,

beginning with the prosecution of Dr. Dodd in 1777, and including the trials of Bellingham (for the assassination of the statesman, Perceval) in 1812, the Cato Street conspirators in 1820, the Clerkenwell Fenians, and such celebrated murderers as Mrs. Manning, Peace, and Le-froy. In the other Courts all kinds of miscellaneous cases are heard under the direction of the Recorder, Sir Charles

Sir Charles's manner and demeanour always lead you to suppose that, at the age of fifty-two, he is surprised to find himself presiding over the rather gruesome business of the Old Bailey. As Common Serjeant, on the other hand, Sir J. Forrest Fulton is almost to the manner born. For nearly twenty years he was one of the most active practitioners at the Old Bailey, although he



NEWGATE

Hall, Q.C., M.P., or the Common Serjeant, Sir Forrest Fulton, Q.C. Sir Charles has been Recorder four or five years, but even yet he gives you the impression of not being "at home" at the Old Bailey. I do not mean that he does not prove himself well qualified to administer the criminal law, but as a barrister Sir Charles Hall's work was far removed from that of the Central Criminal Court. His practice lay principally in the Admiralty Division, and he was distinguished as Attorney-General to the Prince of Wales. Hence

never obtained there the reputation of a Ballantine or a Montagu Williams. He is conversant with all its ways, with the characteristics of its leading counsel, the pulse of its juries, the idiosyncrasies of its typical witnesses, and the crucial points of nine-tenths of its cases. As the result, the Common Serjeant has a remarkably quick method of getting through his work. The terse directness of his summing-up, delivered in a voice which is always clear if sometimes coldly metallic, is always in refreshing contrast to the tedious iteration and useless

loquacity which counsel and witnesses between them so often inflict upon the jury. Both Sir Charles Hall and Sir J. Forrest Fulton are models, as a rule, of fairness and impartiality to the prisoner, of courtesy and kindness to witnesses and jurymen.

In the prevalence of these virtues, indeed, the Central Criminal Court has grown out of recognition of its former self. The Old Bailey barrister, at one time a just term of reproach, is almost as dead as the dodo. Now and again there may be a suggestion of the old practitioners, whose principal forensic arts were to bully the witnesses and to shed crocodile's tears in the sight of the jury. But the leaders of the Old Bailey Bar at the present day—Mr. Charles Mathews, Mr. C. F. Gill, Mr. Horace Avory and Mr. Geogeghan, &c.—are men of quite a different stamp. There are now, I believe, about a hundred members of the Old Bailey Bar Mess, and as a rule about half this number are to be found in the dif-

ferent Courts. It is sad to think how many of these men fail to get a brief during the sittings from month to month. A barrister practising at the Old Bailey, however, has the consolation of knowing that sooner or later his turn will come for what in the slang of the Bar is known as "a spoonful of soup." By "soup" are understood the briefs for the prosecution in cases of ordinary importance

which are given out with an impartial hand by the Treasury and come in rotation to every barrister practising at the Court. To the newly "called" young man one of these briefs is the first rung in the ladder—which, in the imagination of the ambitious, reaches to the dizzy heights of Lord Halsbury or Lord



THE OLD BAILEY—INSIDE THE COURT

Russell, Sir Edward Clarke and Sir Frank Lockwood. Each of these distinguished men laid the foundations of their future fame at the Old Bailey; Sir Edward Clarke still occasionally re-visits it to have his memory revived of the time when he was glad enough of a spoonful of soup from the official tureen.

A day at the Old Bailey, if not exactly

exhilarating, is not all gloom. True, you realise as you never realised before how much unhappiness and misery are represented by those brief newspaper reports of the Central Criminal Court. But the witness-box—and occasionally even the dock—has a humour and a pathos that are full of human interest. I think that the makers of our best melodramas must sometimes go to the Old Bailey and obtain many a suggestion from the figure successively appearing in the witness-box and the little bits from the life-stories of Londoners which they tell. Even the squalid crowd of men and women assembled round the doorways of the Court, discussing the prospects of friends "in trouble" and revolving on the perjury by which—too often—they hope to "get them off," have an aspect for the reflective observer which is not altogether ignoble. The

shade is, of course, out of all proportion to the light, but the light and shade together can hardly fail to interest keenly all but the most hardened frequenters—such as the newspaper reporters—of the Old Bailey. The juror summoned for the Sessions is an object of commiseration among his friends and neighbours, and all the way to the Court condoles with himself on his ill-luck. But before long—whether on duty in the box or in waiting on the side seats—he generally yields to the dramatic interest of the scene which is being enacted before him. A jury have often been known to prolong a case—long after their minds had been decisively made up in favour of acquittal—simply to give themselves the pleasure of hearing Mr. Charles Mathews heighten the realistic meaning—as he knows so well how to do—of the facts which had been laid before them.



Cotton in Liverpool

WRITTEN BY E. RIMBAULT DIBDIN. ILLUSTRATED BY H. N. BROWNE

LIVERPOOL is, above all things, a cotton port; the trail of the ancient Indian fibre is over all the mercantile district. On 'Change the talk is of cotton, and the frequenters go about wearing coats covered with tufts of white down, the youngest and obscurest brokers being,

ragged and disreputable that one has difficulty in appreciating their value. Liverpool boasts the finest draught horses in the world, and they are needed. Despite their heavy work, however, they look sleek and prosperous.

The influence of cotton is even more obvious at the Docks, where it pre-



DISCHARGING COTTON

of course, the most downy. Larger tufts lie in profusion about the streets, small boys with apparently ponderous but really trifling loads of sample parcels collide with you at all corners; the newspapers devote columns daily to incomprehensible figures about "crop movements" and other recondite matters; and continually the causeways groan under luries bearing enormous loads of bales which look so dirty,

dominates ruthlessly, though Liverpool has an enormous share of almost all the businesses of the world. The world's production of cotton in the year 1895-1896 was estimated by Mr. A. B. Shepperson, of New York, as about six thousand millions of pounds, and somewhere about a fifth of this, nearly three million bales, comes to Liverpool. In its water-carriage the finest mercantile fleets in the world are constantly en-



WAITING TO BE LOADED

gaged. No week, even in the summer season, fails to bring at least a few thousand bales. The giant passenger steamers between Liverpool and New York do not carry cotton; but vessels of at least equal capacity are employed, as is illustrated by the recent record-breaking arrivals of the *American* with about 20,000 bales, and the *Samoa* with

about 18,000—the latter being probably the larger cargo of the two, as the cotton was from Texas, where much larger bales are made. The Liverpool docks and warehouses are equal to all demands. The warehoused cotton commonly exceeds a million bales, and sometimes nearly double that quantity is accommodated, but with difficulty.



LOADING THE LURRIES

The cotton debarkation takes place principally in the docks at the north and south ends of the port. It is only at the north end that the largest vessels can be received and accommodated. Once in the dock no time is lost, but sometimes in the height of the cotton season some delay is inevitable. I have seen as many as seven vessels lying side by side in the

town dues; after which a crane swings it to its place on a lurry. There is not much evidence of muscular decadence about the performances of the lusty Lancashire lads who assist at these performances.

American bales of cotton, as they lie on the quay, tattered, grimy, shapeless, wrapped in coarsest canvas, bound with



ON THE FLAG

dock waiting for berths. One of the great ocean liners at the quay is like a mighty Gulliver bound and powerless in the hands of Lilliputian armies. Ugly and industrious as ants, porters swarm over the quay, while below in the hold others are preparing the bales for the steam or hydraulic cranes that make light of any load, however ponderous. As each bale is deposited it is weighed in order to determine freight, dock, and

rusty hoop-iron, look so disreputable and valueless that it is hard to believe they are worth from £8 to £10 each. At all the docks a most careful watch is kept, not only to prevent theft, but also on behalf of her Majesty's Customs; and at docks where cotton is handled the precautions are doubled, for not only is cotton easily stolen, but it is highly inflammable. Woe to the man, no matter of what degree, who is caught



SEARCHING FOR MATCHES

smoking within the dock enclosure or even on board a ship in dock! The manner in which cotton is packed and handled makes it inevitable that countless wisps of it should be scattered to the ground, and the picking up of these by the poorest poor is a definite industry in which very many dreadful specimens of humanity engage. They are, of course, thieves whenever they get a chance, and they pursue their employment under great restrictions and the most vigilant supervision.

The destination of each lurry is some huge warehouse of five or six storeys, arrived at which it is speedily relieved of its burden.

The interior of a warehouse when cotton is arriving presents a scene of apparent confusion not unlike that on the Dock Quay, but instead of bright daylight a Tartarian gloom prevails everywhere beyond a few feet from the door of the room, only modified here and there by lanterns, carefully padlocked and barred. On the arrival of cotton bales which have changed hands

since shipment they are re-weighed, and then wheeled on hand trucks up the gangway to temporary resting-places.

The next event in the career of a bale is that of being sampled. Though only about 5 feet 1 inch by 2 feet 8 inches by 2 feet in size, it contains an immense quantity of cotton, four to five hundred pounds closely packed by hydraulic pressure; wrapped in coarse canvas, and bound together with seven or eight stout iron bands, like the heart of the faithful servant in the fairy tale, to keep it from bursting. In sampling one or more of these bands is broken with a "goose." A large handful of cotton, weighing about a quarter of a pound, is drawn



SAMPLE BOY

out, carefully ticketed for identification, and placed on one side to be "dressed" or trimmed to shape before being sent to the broker's office. This done, and not before, the bale reaches its temporary resting-place. Sampling is not so simple a process as it might seem—like most things in connection with the cotton trade its methods have been perfected to a fine art, and a really clever sampler is a valuable man. He will contrive to supply a sample to his employer which, if he be a seller, exhibits its quality to the utmost advantage, or, if he be a buyer, contains the maximum of seeds, twigs, discolorations, and other defects. The commercial value of samples is very considerable, so much so that a broker thinks himself very unlucky if his office rent or other expenses are not covered by the produce of his "bin."

The cotton porter differs from the common dock labourer, being to some slight extent a skilled workman, and he is usually a neat writer and ready reckoner. He earns about four shillings and sixpence per day, but though this seems good pay, it must be remembered that the work is hard and not constant. Men who have "seen better days" are to be found among the porters, but a certain measure of respectability is required, if only on account of the fire risk. The regulations not only forbid smoking, but even the carrying of materials, and the porters are searched very thoroughly before they fall to work—a necessary indignity which, to judge by their expressions, is decidedly unpalatable.

Some people attribute cotton fires to the detectives whose business it is to prevent breaches of the rules. These men are well known, and on their approach notice is promptly passed round a warehouse by a peculiar method of telegraphy. Any man with a pipe or matches must immediately divest himself of them, and what hiding-place is better or readier to the hand than a crevice in a bale? Once a spark gets to work there is very little hope for a warehouse. It is not the bales themselves that make the danger so great, but the

all-pervading loose cotton-down, which covers everything, and even seems to fill the air, and which ignites with such rapidity that the moment a flame is seen everyone in the warehouse has to run for his life.

The samples when duly made up and ticketed are carried to the offices of merchants and brokers, who cluster



A COTTON PICKER

thickly in and around the Exchange Buildings, which enclose three sides of the Square, known as "The Flags," the fourth side of which is filled by the back of the Town Hall, one of the oldest buildings in Liverpool, yet—so much of a mushroom is the city—the oldest part is not much more than a hundred and fifty years old.

The mysteries of the cotton trade are controlled by the Cotton Association, which has a large membership of merchants or brokers. The merchant buys and imports cotton; the broker sells it or buys it (selling broker and buying broker being quite distinct), but the distinction between merchant and broker is not so clear as it might appear, for there are merchants who are also brokers, brokers who are also merchants, jobbing brokers who do not precisely fall into either category, but live—and live well—by speculations in cotton, and other varieties, down to that body of honest jobbers long known by the nickname of "The Forty Thieves."

There is probably no staple of commerce which commands such an elaborate and skilfully-ordered mechanism for distribution as cotton: none which is more involved in the meshes of speculation. Occasionally a crisis comes: some greatly daring financier forms a syndi-

cate and endeavours to "corner" the market of a particular month by such large purchases in advance as will enable him to force prices up artificially. Failure, however, is the common result of such ventures, but only after a period of intense crisis, during which highly dramatic scenes are enacted on the flags. Until a short time ago the merchants and brokers congregated for business on the flags, no matter what the weather might be; but now there is a new and handsome Cotton Exchange, which is found a welcome novelty when the weather-clerk provides wind, rain, frost or snow; and the flags are only now resorted to for conversation and fresh air in the intervals of more serious business. Liverpool sells all the cotton she imports, for, oddly enough, all attempts made from time to time to spin it have proved failures. When Manchester and her satellites import all their own cotton by way of the ship canal, Liverpool will perhaps try again! The metamorphoses undergone by these bales of fleece, from the sheep of the vegetable kingdom before they reach the consumer in the form of calicoes, "all wool" goods and finest "silk velvets," are full of curious interest, but form no part of the subject of this brief sketch.





SCENE AT THE WEST PIER.
Photo by E. Hawkins and Co., Brighton

WRITTEN BY FREDERICK A. A. TALBOT

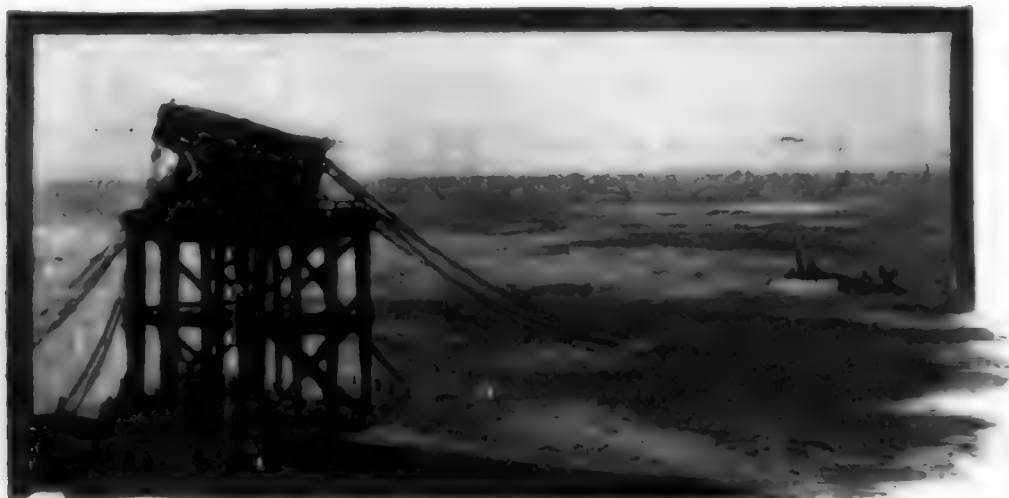
FRIDAY, December 4th, 1896! If the records of the Meteorological Office for this date are perused, it will be observed that a terrific gale, almost unparalleled in tempestuousness, raged upon our eastern and southern shores, inflicting tremendous and widespread havoc. Also, if the annals of the flourishing seaside town of Brighton are but transiently examined, it will be found that this self-same date is a most memorable one in its history, as the zenith of the fury of this euroclydon was vented upon this popular resort, wreaking devastation and desolation to the tune of several thousands of pounds upon every side. But the most eventful episode was the total demolition of the familiar Chain Pier, which was swept away into the depths of the Channel during the height of the gale.

The history of this quondam picturesque "lion" of London-super-Mare is both interesting and romantic. First opened to the public on the 25th of November, 1823, it had braved the severe storms of the Channel for seventy-three years. The designer and constructor was Mr. Samuel Brown, a commander in the Navy of his Majesty George IV. It was indubitably a marvel of engineering skill, and although its wooden foun-

dations appeared bizarre in juxtaposition with the modern gigantic iron columns that constitute the supports of our piers of to-day, one cannot help admiring the ingenuity and prescience of the builder in the unique style of construction of which he availed himself. The pier was in all 1,150 feet in length, and was suspended by immense iron chains upon four clumps of wooden piles, placed at intervals of 258 feet apart. The vertical baulks of timber forming the principal foundations were driven 10 feet into the solid rock sea-bottom, and projected 14 feet above high water. To ensure additional stability and solidity to these piles, which were of titanic proportions, some of them weighing half a ton, they were iron shod, nail mailed, and tied firmly together by heavy cross-pieces, converting the whole structure, as it were, into one solid, rigid skeleton framework. The fourth pile from the shore, being the pierhead and landing-stage for passengers—a regular steamboat service formerly existed between Brighton and France, but owing to the difficulty experienced by passengers in embarking and landing because of the rough weather that frequently prevailed, the service was subsequently transferred to Newhaven, where, proper harbour and landing accommodation being afforded, the pas-

sengers suffered no inconvenience from inclement weather—was considerably larger, being about 80 feet long by about 40 feet wide, and weighed closely upon 200 tons. Crowning each collocation of piles were two pyramidal towers of cast-iron, 25 feet in height, from which depended the massive suspension chains, four upon each side, that supported the wooden deck. At the shore end these main chains were firmly secured to a huge mass of iron, three tons in weight, embedded over 50 feet into the face of the cliff, which rises precipitously from the water's edge; while at the sea extremity the chains were carried in a wood encase-

life for twelve hours' rustication at the seaside, have trod its deck with the same keen delight. The moresque appearance of its towers, its graceful symmetry and outline, its peculiar quaintness of construction and picturesque unconventionality, so refreshing after the prosaic, not to say ugly, iron piers so prevalent nowadays, made it dear to all. But the venerable old man, Age, whose attacks we may resist feebly for a time, but not vanquish, coupled with the severe tempests of seventy years, had played sad havoc with its foundations, and it had at last become so decrepit that, in the interests of the public safety, it was deemed advisable to close its gates. As



REMAINS OF THE CHAIN PIER AT LOW WATER

Photo by E. Hawkins and Co., Brighton

ment, keyed and bolted to the foundation piles to maintain it in position, and anchored firmly to the rocky sea-bottom. The chains were connected to the sides of the bridge by iron rods, fluctuating in length according to the sag of the chain. On the whole it was of immense strength and stability, and certainly no iron structure could have resisted so efficaciously the terrible buffetings of the Channel seas for such a span of years. Up to within a few years of its demise it was the rendezvous of all the rank and fashion of Brighton. High and low, from our gracious Queen and other royal personages and equipages to the "umble 'Arry and 'Arriett," who had left the vitiated air and humdrum city

may be seen in our first illustration, the pierhead had assumed a most dangerous list, while the second clump of piles from the shore was in an even more precarious condition, and the whole structure oscillated most alarmingly in a gale of but mediocre turbulence.

Punctually at dusk on this memorable 4th of December, old Fogden the shipwright, precisely as he had done every night at the same hour for forty years before, walked out to the pierhead in the teeth of the rising gale, trimmed and lighted the lamp that shed its warning rays across the dark waters for ships that would pass in the night. How sagely this weather-beaten old sea-dog must have gazed at the ominous

clouds scudding across the sky and listened to the sinister moaning of the rising "sou' easter," and, with the prerogative innate to all those whose livelihood is by the sea, prognosticated "a dirty rough night"! It was indeed, though even his worst anticipations must have been more than realised in what followed. As the night wore on and the tide mounted higher and higher, the wind increased in strength and each succeeding wave rolled in with accentuated violence. It was nearly half-past ten and wanted but half an hour to high tide. Few

thundered upon the beach, and many swept over the sea-wall on to the esplanade above, hurling pebbles they had gathered up in their anger with terrific force upon the pavement, while the spray dashed vehemently against the houses along the sea-front. Those in the vicinity of the Chain Pier gazed anxiously seawards. In the dim hazy light they could faintly discern tremendous seas sweeping with relentless violence against the pier, frequently enveloping it in a white seething cloud of spray, and the sea appeared to hurl



THE DEVASTATION AT THE WEST PIER
Photo by E. Hawkins and Co., Brighton

people lingered upon the sea-front, for the inclemency of the elements had driven the majority to seek the more hospitable shelter and warmth of their fireside, but those who defied the fury of the storm witnessed a magnificent though awful sight. The wind was blowing with the velocity of a hurricane, and whistled, shrieked and howled so fiendishly that even the most atheistical could scarcely help being impressed with the momentous omnipotence of Nature, and might have cried conscientiously:

*"O, hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea."*

Huge waves in all their solemn grandeur

its herculean blows with redoubled vigour upon its weakest spot, as if fully cognisant of its debility. Suddenly a huge, ragged foam crested wave, mightier than the rest, was observed rolling majestically shorewards. It struck with full force the treacherous and tottering clump of piles. The whole structure staggered under the terrific impact; the chains groaned under the augmented strain, and, being incapable of resistance, gave way, snapping one after another with loud reports like a rifle volley; the pierhead light vacillated to and fro in a curious manner; and then, with a terrific crash, distinctly heard above the roar of

the storm, the whole pier from the entrance to its furthest sea extremity, together with its foundations, with the exception of the first pile from the shore, heeled over and disappeared beneath the waves. It had all happened within the space of a few seconds, and the handful of spectators loitering around the entrance did not readily grasp what had really happened; but when the

the overwhelming success that attended its first assault upon the handiwork of man, now rent asunder the huge baulks of timber, and utterly regardless of their elephantine proportions and weight, tossed them hither and thither like straws upon its fermenting bosom. Many of them were dashed against the stone groynes that successfully defied the element, and were smashed into



DEBRIS ON THE BEACH AT LOW TIDE

Photo by E. Hawkins and Co., Brighton

huge chains drooped limply across the road, and they rushed to the front and beheld a yawning abyss of foaming water, where less than a minute before the pier had rested nobly, they realised that the worst had happened, and that the stately landmark which had been so dear to them for nearly three-quarters of a century was now enumerated "among the things that were."

The foundering of the chain pier, however, was but the beginning of the end. The insatiable sea, flushed with

splinters; while some were carried upon the crest of a wave and propelled with gigantic force into the roadway. Many boats on the beach were stove in and otherwise wrecked. But the damage was not confined to the precincts of the Chain Pier. The West Pier, a magnificent iron structure about a mile to the westward of where the destroyed pier formerly stood, was assailed with dozens of the cumbersome timbers that had been swept in an occidental direction by the tide. No ancient army with their

unwieldy battering-rams ever plied so zestfully and with such effective success against the walls of a beleaguered city, as did the waves armed with débris against this pier. It was a grand sight. The heavy timbers of the wrecked pier were carried by rushing volumes of water and impelled with awe-inspiring force against the massive iron columns that constitute the supports to the structure. The iron columns echoed back defiance! The sea, as if infuriated by this feeble opposition, increased its energy, and the huge logs of timber fell upon them like hailstones upon a window-pane. Still they held out, but not for long. Nature triumphed over man. When one recollects the weight of the missiles and the tremendous impetus that was imparted to them by the surging sea, it is not surprising that these supports, after a short and heroic defence, surrendered and snapped one after another as if composed of the most brittle materials.

In the morning a terrible spectacle presented itself. Although the turbulence of the sea had subsided somewhat, it still bubbled, boiled, hissed and foamed upon the beach, a graphic idea of which is conveyed in our illustration. The massive iron towers that surmounted the first clump of piles, although almost intact, had heeled over to a most alarming degree and threatened to fall and bury themselves in the seething billows at any unexpected moment. Around the entrance the poor old shipwright, to whom the Chain Pier had been his whole life and being, wandered disconsolately, and the warning notices in the windows of the kiosks, which were formerly the toll-gates, announcing that "the Royal Chain Pier is closed until

thoroughly examined by our (the borough) engineer," added to the incongruity of the scene. In the foreground of the illustration are the remains of Volk's electric railway which suffered severely from the wrath of the gale. This seashore railway extends for a considerable distance along the shore at Brighton, forming a convenient connection between the various "lions." For many yards each side of the pier the strong wooden viaduct upon which the railway was constructed had been prac-



SEA-GOING CAR

Photo by Donovan, Brighton

tically exterminated, only a few stout joists which were fixed into the solid masonry of the sea-wall, and some twisted rails remaining.

At the West Pier the scene, as will be seen from one of our illustrations, was equally appalling and the damage as widespread. Huge waves still rolled in, sweeping ruthlessly away all that barred their progress. As many of the main supports had been torn away, a large portion of the deck, 100 feet by 150 feet, gradually subsided at one side into the sea. This now constituted a new and

graver danger, as it afforded great resistance to the wind. Great fear was apprehended as to what would happen next. It was the inevitable, and the suspense was not of very long duration. The tremendous seas that were running soon supplemented their destructive force against the settling section with such might that the whole pier quivered under the assaults. The climax was reached. With a terrorising crash it collapsed and disappeared into the sea, thus bisecting the pier. A spice of ex-

any the worse for their involuntary incarceration—in fact, they appeared to have enjoyed their unenviable experience, especially the young ladies.

A week previous to this red-letter day Brighton had become possessed of a new attraction. This was a unique sea-shore railway connecting Brighton with the picturesque little suburb Rottingdean. Contrary to the usual practice, this railroad was constructed several feet from the seashore, being bare at low tide and covered with water several feet in

depth at high tide. The car itself was suspended upon an iron platform, the four supports of which projected sufficiently above the level of the sea at high tide to place the car beyond the reach of the waves. Our illustration on page 643 gives a very comprehensive idea of the car travelling at high water. To prevent the car toppling over, the wheels at the feet of the supports were encased firmly in massive blocks of masonry, which, besides maintaining a perfect equilibrium for the car, performed the additional office of enabling it to travel smoothly. Speculation had been rife as to how the car would



POOR OLD FOGDEN
Forty years shipwright on the Old Chain Pier

citement attended this latest development. Some half a dozen people, including the young ladies engaged in the refreshment buffet, were now imprisoned upon the insulated portion of the pier, and anxiety was exhibited for their safety. No boat could be launched for their rescue, and the gulf was too wide to permit a temporary bridge being thrown across the chasm. There was no alternative but to wait till the tide went down, and then they were rescued from their perilous plight by ladders, none of them, however, feeling

behave in a gale, but the promulgators of this anomalous mode of travelling, imbued with the same spirit of absolute confidence that infused Winstanley regarding his Eddystone Lighthouse, declared that it was sufficiently stable to resist a gale many times the severity of any yet experienced upon the south coast. Alas for the degenerate egotism and self-aggrandisement of mortals! This gale conclusively proved that it was *not* capable of withstanding a heavy sea by completely swallowing it up. When morning broke not a trace or vestige

of the car was to be seen. Where was it? What had become of it? The solution to the enigma was not very

of the erstwhile Chain Pier protruded above the water like the ghastly remains of a stranded ship, while the massive chains from the first pile trailed languidly from each side of the drooping towers. On the beach the damage was more frightful, being thickly strewn with cumbersome baulks of timber thrown up promiscuously and left by the sea. The West Pier was divided, dilapidated and tottering. On the beach lay a few of the heavier broken iron columns, while many of the other supports had been distorted into remarkable shapes. The whole edifice was in a most unsafe condition, and had to be thoroughly



THE CHAIN PIER BEFORE THE GALE
Photo by E. Hawkins and Co., Brighton

distant. As the tide ebbed, a few twisted iron rails, fashioned into fantastic shapes, appeared above the water, then splinters of wood, followed by remnants of the interior upholstery. This was all that remained of what a few hours previously had been one of the "prides" of Brighton.

The sea, however, by this time had expended its exuberant potentiality. Apparently gloating over the wholesale devastation it had wrought, as it receded it cast up the fruits of its victories in dying spasmodic efforts upon the beach. At low tide, what an extraordinary and direful spectacle presented itself! It was devastation, desolation and débris upon every side. What the fluid element did not accomplish the tempest did, and what the gale commenced the sea completed. Out to sea the base, gaunt timbers of the other clumps of piles

overhauled and renovated—the damage was estimated at about £2,000—before it could be re-opened to the public. There was scarcely a perfect yard of Volk's electric railway intact, and something like £2,000 had to be expended to restore it, while the station of the Sea-Going Car at Paston Groyne was nothing



THE CHAIN PIER THE MORNING AFTER THE GALE
Photo by Donovan, Brighton

more than a heterogeneous heap of timbers and iron, literally speaking, not one piece being left joined to another. But it is an ill wind that blows nobody good. Now the Chain Pier was gone, many who had given it only a cursory thought while it was among them, were now only too anxious to obtain a memento. The gale which had been so disastrous to Brighton was a perfect God-send to the lower orders, who, cognisant of the sympathy now aroused, improved the shining hour by fashioning such ephemeral articles as walking-sticks, &c., out of the stranded piles, vending iron nuts and bolts, and for a little while Brighton beach was a veritable Klondike to this fraternity. Relics of the Chain Pier now repose in an honourable resting-place in the homes of hundreds, though

it must be confessed that the unscrupulous did not hesitate to manufacture their souvenirs out of wood other than that of the Chain Pier, and in many cases out of that which had never so much as seen Brighton before. The unpatriotic were in their hey-day, and struggled home to their scantily-furnished, comfortless, poverty-stricken homes under the crushing weight of some huge log of timber, to return for a second, and probably many other equally heavy loads. There were few homes that did not possess on the next day of that bleak December a roaring and heat-yielding fire, so that although it had caused widespread havoc, the force of the sea was the means of gladdening many a dissatisfied and sorrowing heart.



The Golden Scarab

WRITTEN BY J. W. BRESLIN. ILLUSTRATED BY M. B. SALMON



I HAD come to hate the sight of it, yet I could not keep long away from the shop where it was displayed. I desired it, but told myself that it would be folly to purchase it, and, naturally, in the end I became its possessor. To be the cause of so much vacillation it was a very trivial object, merely an absolute facsimile in gold of an ancient Egyptian scarab. It was about the size of the palm of a man's hand, and was fashioned of pure gold. It was hollow, a mere shell, to judge by its weight, but the closest examination failed to detect any join or opening on its surface. It was inscribed with hieroglyphics, which, despite the plausibility of their arrangement, I was quite unable to decipher. Beyond the exceptional material employed, if genuine, or if modern, that any artist should have thought it worth his labour to counterfeit with such extraordinary precision so common an amulet, my fascination was inexplicable. It had caught my eye as it lay among a miscellaneous collection of jewellery and trinkets on a tray in the window of a pawnbroker's sale-room, and for weeks I had gone almost daily to look at it, and turn away, resisting the temptation to which I at length succumbed.

I placed it in my pocket, and hurried home, fingering it as I went with a delightful sense of possession; and in the seclusion of my study I examined it in detail. The metal was bright and clean, and free from scratches, as if it had just left the engraver's hands, but it bore no trace of signature or hall-mark, and I could not decide whether the workmanship was of recent or antique date. I laid the scarab on my knee, and fell to

musings as to when it was made, and why and by whom.

Night came down, creeping out from corners and recesses till the whole room was in darkness, but I did not notice it. I had gradually become aware of a peculiar, sweet, pungent odour, growing more insistent as the twilight deepened, with a strange sultry oppressiveness, which roused me to vague speculation as to its origin, and I remembered it as the odour which is felt, only in less degree, when unwrapping the clinging cerements of a mummy. I looked up to see if a large glass case, or cabinet, containing a very fine example, which had once been a priest of Osiris, was in any way damaged. I rubbed my eyes and looked again. I did not see the case, but it was not that which made me doubtful of my vision. As my eyes travelled to the case, I should have caught the dark outline of one of two rhododendrons which graced my somewhat prim and restricted front garden, but instead of the blurred outlines visible through the dusk of an English evening, what I saw was a grandiose vision of gigantic buildings ranged in sharply contrasted lines of light and shade, and beyond a cool glow where the star-lit splendour of an Eastern night was reflected from a vast expanse of water. I looked eagerly, greedily, for I saw Egypt, the Egypt of the Pharaohs, not dead, deserted, overpiled with the dust of centuries, but full of the stately pomp of life. The streets, the temples, the palaces, sparkled with innumerable lights; slow-pacing processions and hustling throngs moved hither and thither; the house-tops were crowded with men and women, resting, feasting, singing; the river alive with boats gliding through the cool night air. I saw Egypt as not the most learned could reconstruct it, not as it might live

in the assuredness of dreams, but vivid beyond conception in palpitating reality.

A sudden impression that there was someone standing beside me caused me to turn round, and when I looked again, reluctant to loose my eyes from that wonderful vision, I saw only the familiar outlines of the rhododendron and the railings beyond. I gazed vacantly, incuriously, merely conscious that what I had seen was no longer there, till roused by a voice at my ear: "What, Swinton, moping among your plunderings from the past?"

I looked up and saw my old friend Dr. Rainsford, and pulled my wits together to greet him. I lit the gas, and as I did so he noticed my latest acquisition and inquired, "Surely something new?"

"Yes," I said; "it has been a source of temptation to me for weeks, and as you see, I could not resist the temptation to buy. It is a very common form of amulet, but it has some exceptional features. The material is unusual; it is hollow, and yet it is not a box, as I have examined it carefully with a powerful glass. The third feature is that I cannot make head or tail of the hieroglyphics engraved on it. I must take it to Faucit and see if he can interpret them."

"But," objected Rainsford, "is it not possibly a counterfeit, and the symbols merely superficial in the vraisemblance?"

"No, I think not. A copyist is bound to make some mistake, and I have found none: and though I cannot decipher the inscription, it has a certain ordered appearance, from which I gather that it has a meaning. It has been an ungovernable abscission to me. I brought it home this afternoon, and have been poring over it till the approach of darkness, which, by the way, reminds me that a most wonderful hallucination was dispelled by your entry. My mind was certainly deep in things Egyptian, and, happening to look out of the window there by the mummy, I believed I saw, not my suburban front garden, but ancient and majestic Egypt in all the glory of actuality. The more I think of it, the more astonished I am, as my

vision differed in many details from what I should have imagined according to my knowledge, and yet I somehow fancy that these details were not the mere irrational variations of a dream."

My friend, instead of laughing at me as I expected, took the matter seriously. "It is certainly very strange. I cannot say you did not see the truth, nor yet can I admit that it was more than a vivid reminiscence of your knowledge of this particular subject. There is no doubt that to a certain extent the past is existent to us, as shown in dreams, which, though mostly absurd farragoes, yet sometimes represent old experiences with startling reality. At times I could almost say that if our own past lives in ourselves, why not the past of the world, somewhere, somehow? Why should it be more wonderful than that with the aid of some clock-work we should see and hear incidents enacted thousands of miles from us and in the grave of time past?"

"You are wandering in very thorny ways," I remarked with a laugh; "you might as well speculate as to the origin of life."

"And why not," he cried warmly. "I am a surgeon, a sort of tinker who sews and solders the battered vessels come from other hands than his, careless of whence they come or where they go, their use or abuse, yet I cannot help wondering at times whether the human body is simply an exquisite adjustment of parts, or whether there is something behind it all. Life, yet life which flies by a gash or pin-prick, which flames or flickers with its containing matter, and still may be a spark when the organism is perfect, a conflagration when it is a wreck. It is a strange speculation."

"Strange indeed," I said; "but I suppose your profession will not be content till it has discovered the fount and origin of life, and succeeded in separating it from the body and keeping it bottled on your shelves for supply to all who may require it."

"Well, I shouldn't be surprised out of reason if something that way came about; but we have ascended to somewhat too rare an atmosphere, let us



"LET ME KNOW IF YOU SOLVE THAT CRUX"

change the subject." And our conversation took another turn.

As Rainsford took his leave his eye caught the golden scarab lying on the table, and he said jestingly:

"Let me know if you solve that crux. The old Egyptians have been credited with some curious knowledge."

"O, certainly," I rejoined, in the same tone. "I may find some long-lost secret;" and as he left I took up the scarab to put it in the place which I

had long since decided it should occupy. This was on one of the shelves in the glass case containing the mummy and my collection of antiquities. As I moved some objects to make room for it, I had a momentary impression that the mummy was stirred, and instinctively put out my hand to steady it, when I found that it was beyond the reach of any accidental touch. I tried if the supports on which it lay were in position; but they were quite firm, and I

concluded that my eye must have been deceived by some chance reflection in the glass.

For some time after this I was occupied with other matters, and forgot the golden scarab and its indecipherable inscription. It was recalled to my mind by chance, and I decided to call the next day upon Professor Faucit, the eminent Egyptologist, and get his opinion. On my way home I was passed by a newsboy shouting, "Special! Mysterious murder! Escape of the assassin!" And I bought a paper from him and thrust it in my pocket.

On reaching home I opened the journal, and was profoundly shocked to read that Faucit had been found murdered in his study. He had evidently been engrossed in the examination of some papyri, and had been struck down unawares from behind. So far as was known there had been no robbery, and the only trace of the murderer were some footprints on the ground below the window of the Professor's room. These were curiously long and narrow, and appeared to have been made by a person walking in his stocking soles. There was no known motive for the crime, and the only plausible explanation was that the murderer had come unexpectedly into the room and attacked the Professor in an impulse of fear for his own safety if discovered. I noticed that my friend Rainsford had been called, and as he had an appointment with me for that afternoon I looked forward to receiving from him a less sensational and more accurate statement of the facts.

While pacing up and down the room I noticed the trace of dirty fingers on the door of the glass case. With the strange aptitude of the mind for trivialities in even the most solemn circumstances, I resented this untidiness and wiped off the marks with my handkerchief. In doing so I noticed that the smears ran close to the edge of the polished frame as if the door had been open when they were made. This, however, was absurd. The door fitted closely into a velvet-lined recess, and could only be opened by inserting the key into the lock and using it as a handle. A glance

told me that the various articles lay on their shelves undisturbed, and I knew my servants would not venture to closer acquaintance with the grim, drawn countenance of the long-dead priest of Osiris.

The matter would never have recurred to my mind but for another circumstance, also of trivial moment if taken by itself. I was about to close one of the windows which happened to be open when I noticed on one of the panes, but on the outside, similar finger-marks. They were more strongly impressed, and were of a faint reddish-brown colour. This appeared as if the person who had left the stains on the case had entered by the window. I went outside to see if I could trace any sign of entrance, and on the narrow strip of flower border by the wall I found the impress of a foot set down, half on the grass, half on the soft mould. It appeared to have been made by a long, narrow foot covered with a stocking. As I looked at it a nameless horror crept upon me that the vile being who had done Faucit to death must have entered my dwelling after the deed, Heaven knows with what purpose.

Rainsford entered from the road as I was standing there, and called to me, but I was incapable of speech, and could only beckon him to me.

"Swinton," he said, "anything wrong? You're as white as chalk."

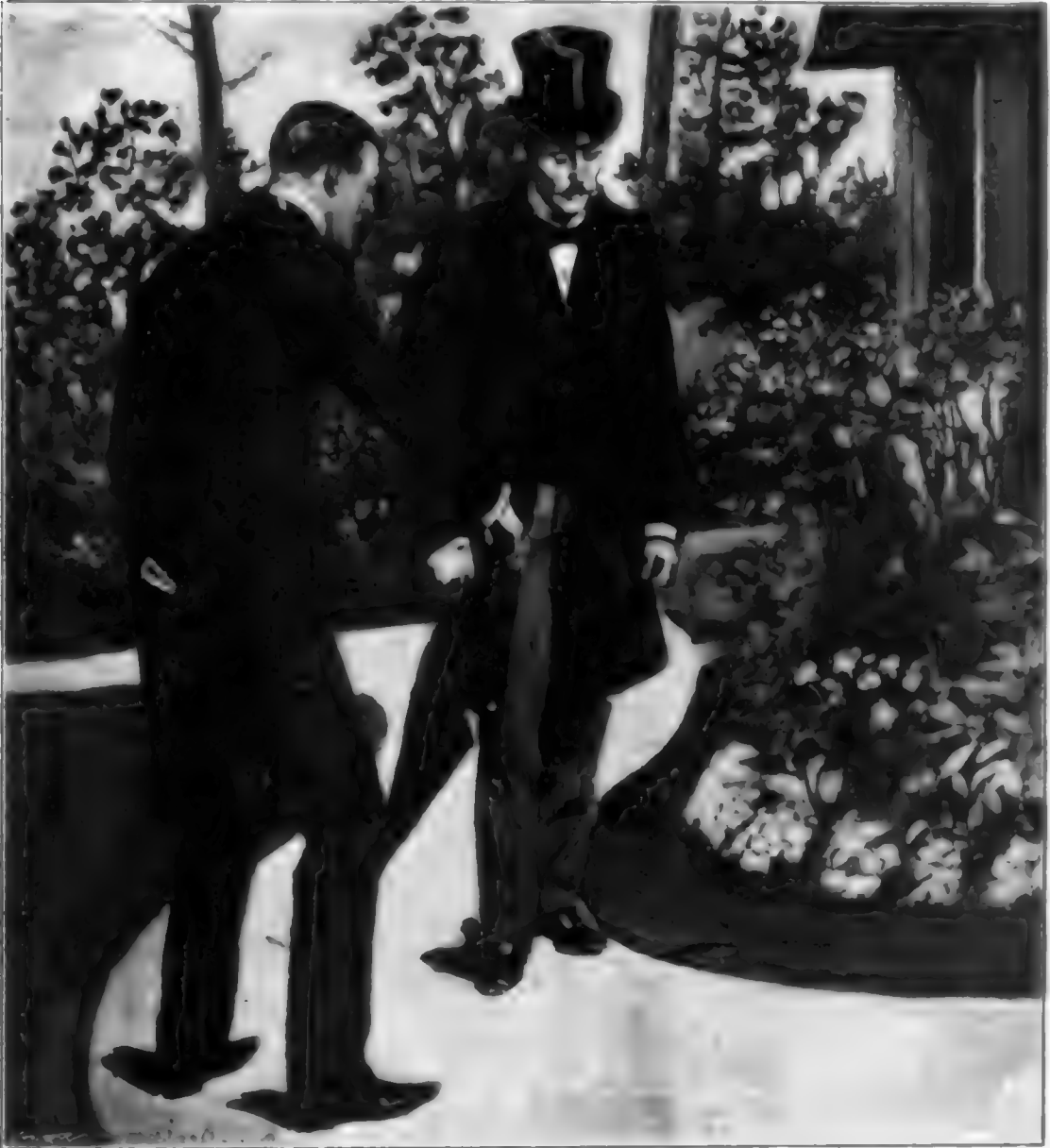
For answer I pointed to the mark on the border. He stooped to examine it, but immediately started back. "Great Heaven, it's the same! How did you know?"

I told him how I had made the discovery, and on his advice sent for the police. They came and made a careful and minute search, but made no further discovery. The only explanation they could give was that the man must have found the window partly open, and entered the room and tried to secure the only portable object of value in it, the golden scarab, but had been scared and fled. As they left the house one remarked: "It's odd he came to you, sir; another gentleman with a fancy for them old Egyptian things."

The days went by, and the murder of Faucit remained an unsolved mystery.

I fell back into my usual routine, only very particular to see that all the windows on the basement were duly fastened before retiring for the night. I spent hours of vain labour over the hieroglyphics on the scarab. One evening, after

murdered, and another developing monomania. But that reminds me of something I have to tell you. A man was brought to me this morning. He had been attacked and half strangled quite close to your gate by a Hindu-looking



"I POINTED TO THE MARK ON THE BORDER"

long puzzling, I was sitting with it in my hand, when I saw again a wonderful vision of old, dead Egypt. Something drew away my attention, and, as before, it had vanished when I looked again.

The next evening I told Rainsford, but he laughed at me. "This locality is getting notorious. One Egyptologist

fellow, all bundled up in dirty linen, and smelling most atrocious. I use his own description. Might it not be some insane Asiatic, and possibly the murderer of Faucit?"

"O," I said, carelessly, "more likely some quick-tempered native against whom the fellow may have been airing

his drunken wit. There are two or three Hindu servants about here."

"Very probable," admitted Rainsford, dropping his hastily-found clue, and the conversation on the subject ended.

I later made a discovery which I confess I kept to myself, as my friend, in spite of his transcendental discourse on hallucinations, might have insisted on a course of matter-of-fact treatment. It was that I could call up my visions of old Egypt by merely holding the golden scarab in my hand and looking in the direction of the case containing my Egyptian relics. They were invariably night scenes, and the most prominent actors in them were the priesthood of Osiris. Sometimes I beheld the celebration of strange rites amid the vast splendours of some mighty temple, at others a ceremonial procession through the streets or by the banks of the great river. The scenes were of amazing vividness and reality, but I could only see them on the approach of evening, and they stood out bolder and sharper as the shadows deepened, and I accepted them without question as to the reality of the life they pictured to my eyes.

I had indulged myself in these waking dreams on several occasions when an incident occurred which brought them to an abrupt conclusion. One morning early, and while it was yet dark, I was awakened by a thunderous knocking at the house-door. I hurried downstairs, and found a policeman telling the excited servants that he had seen a man enter the house by my study-window. He and another constable had been seeking shelter from a slight shower under some trees, on the opposite side of the road to my house, when they saw an Indian-looking sort of fellow creep stealthily in at the gate, push up the window, and disappear into the house. He answered in every detail to the description of the man who had committed the assault some days previously, and who was also suspected to be the murderer of Professor Faucit. I told the constable he might make sure of his man, as the door of the room was locked, and handing him the key he opened the door, and flashed his lamp into the room. We could see

nothing, though he directed the light into every corner, beyond the usual furniture of the room. The other constable, seeing his watch outside to be no longer necessary, now joined us, and we entered the room, and lit the gas. There was not the slightest sign of an intrusion. The windows were all properly fastened, and I pointed this out to the two policemen, who stood confounded, and I fear I spoke somewhat sharply to them.

"I fear, my good men," I said, "you've been dreaming. There has been no person in this room since I left it, except this gentleman," pointing to the mummy, "and as he's been dead these two or three thousand years, he is not likely to be the man, but you can satisfy yourselves," and I offered to open the case. They, however, declined, somewhat hastily, and left the room, protesting that they could have sworn they saw the man enter the house. As they went out I overheard one remark, "It must have been the ghost of that blessed old mummy."

I felt a bit nervous, and called after them that they might knock up Dr. Rainsford and ask him to come down to me.

Half an hour later Rainsford arrived, and I told him of the incident. My nerves had got a considerable shock, and I must confess I could not help coupling it in some way with my curious visions. He thought I had been worrying too much over that impossible inscription, and that the occurrence unfortunately fitted in with the reveries in which I had been indulging. He asked if the constables had examined the room, and I replied that they had done nothing beyond satisfying themselves that it was empty. "Besides," I added, "the door and windows were fastened." He considered for a few minutes, then said:

"The door and windows might be unfastened from inside. Are you addicted to sleep-walking?"

I had no knowledge of any such tendency, but he said it was quite possible, and continued: "There was a sharp shower at the time. Anyone entering from the wet lawn must have left some trace."

He examined the window, but there were no marks discernible there. A tall man, however, could have stepped over the sill without more than grazing it. We could find no marks on the carpet which could be distinguished from those left by the boots of the constables. We then examined the hall, but also without result. Rainsford admitted himself puzzled. There was not the faintest indication of infraction, and yet it seemed impossible that two men should have been so completely deceived. He continued, however, to move about the room with a light, apparently determined either to prove or disprove the story.

Suddenly he stopped before the glass case. After a few minutes' examination he inquired, "Did you open this?"

"No; why should I? There was no occasion."

"Well," he answered, "look here!" and holding the light in his hand at an angle he pointed to the floor of the case, and I saw some moisture glistening on the polished wood as if a damp cloth had rested against it for a moment.

I stood looking helplessly at the mark, while Rainsford seemed to be considering the next step to be taken. He came quickly to a resolution and asked me to open the door of the cabinet. I did so, and he said, "Now this," pointing to the plate-glass cover to the mummy case. I stared at him in amazement, but he insisted, and together we lifted off the cover. He bent down and passed his hand carefully over the swathings. As he felt the wrappings about the feet he cried out, "Great Heaven, it is impossible! Swinton, feel this."

I put my hand on the wrappings. They were slightly damp.

We stood there trembling in an agony of fear at we knew not what monstrous inconceivable horror glimpsed at through this discovery. Rainsford was the first to recover, pulling himself together with a mighty effort. He felt the hands of the mummy, the drawn features, every portion of the body, but they remained rigid and unyielding.

We sat down, but could not bring ourselves to give utterance to the thoughts which forced themselves upon us. Our

eyes kept wandering to that enigmatic face retaining still a faint umbra of life despite the centuries of the tomb. At length I whispered, "For Heaven's sake, let us get away from it," and we removed to another room.

"It is incredible, but what can be the truth?" said Rainsford when we had somewhat recovered from the first shock of our discovery, but shirking still to put in words our inmost thoughts. "I cannot believe it; but I am certainly going to get to the bottom of it all;" and before parting it was arranged that we should keep watch in the room on the following night.

I passed the day between fits of feverish excitement and nervous depression, alternately longing for and dreading the approach of darkness.

There was a large recess curtained off one end of my study which would furnish us with an admirable place for concealment. It had at one time been a separate room, and had a door leading into it from another part of the house. We sat late trying in vain to converse, and the time seemed interminable till the clock struck the hour at which I usually retired, and we left the room, carefully locking the door behind us. We then noiselessly entered the recess by the other door and took up our position. Rainsford had provided himself with a revolver and a portable electric lamp, by means of which we would be able to immediately procure light.

The room was in total darkness, and we could not distinguish any object in it. Above all we could not discern the faintest outline of the cabinet, as it stood between two windows and in the deepest shadow; but every time I turned my eyes towards it I seemed to see the grim, strange face of its occupant. We had waited some time—how long I cannot say—in profound silence, when Rainsford's hand tightened on my arm, and I heard a faint, tinkling sound followed by an almost imperceptible rustling, and the window curtains were drawn gently aside. We saw dimly a tall figure stoop and raise the sash, then step out into the darkness.



"LIVING OR DEAD . . . IT STOOD FACING US"

The same inconceivable fear which had taken hold of us upon the previous night again held us bound, and it was some minutes before we came to ourselves and struck a light. Our first

glance was towards the case. It was empty: the mummy was gone. I felt my head reeling, and fell heavily to the floor. I awoke to find Rainsford bending over me with a glass in his hand,

from which I drank greedily. My eyes kept wandering to the cabinet, but I could not bring myself to look at it.

"Pull yourself together, Swinton," said my friend. "We must see it out now. I could not leave you and follow the thing. Besides," he added, with a hysterical laugh, "I could not very well ask the first policeman I met to go with me in chase of an escaped mummy. We will wait for its return—for return it will, it must—and face it then."

How the long horror of that night passed I cannot remember. I tried in vain to steady my shaken nerves, and but for Rainsford would have fled from the room. He summoned his whole strength of will to meet whatsoever it might be that came and solve the mystery.

At last we heard the window-sash being moved, and at the faint rustling which followed Rainsford touched the button of the lamp, and at the same moment tore aside the curtains of our hiding-place.

I shrieked aloud at the strange vision disclosed by the sudden light. I saw right before me the figure, the shrivelled face of the long-dead priest of Osiris, and I saw the light of life glowing in the

great hollow orbits of his eyes. My fear fled, and my whole being seemed to be concentrated in the one faculty of sight. I gazed, without curiosity, without speculation, without dread; and I could not satisfy the hunger of my eyes. Living or dead, it—I cannot call it man—stood facing us, calm, inscrutable, mysterious, as when its countenance was first laid to the darkness of centuries. It raised one arm and took a step forward, and at the same moment a loud report echoed through the room. Rainsford had fired.

How can I describe what followed? There was no outcry, no fall, only a slow fluttering of the brown cerements to the floor. We rushed forward. There was nothing but a heap of ancient rags, thickly covered with a pungent, odorous dust, and in their midst we found the golden scarab, battered and dented by the bullet to the nollow within.

Horror gave place to a vague wonder, and Rainsford said slowly, "We cannot explain, we must accept. Perhaps, after all, we had better say we have been victims of an hallucination—in spite of these:" and he pointed to the empty mummy case and the pile of cerements whereon glittered the battered golden scarab.



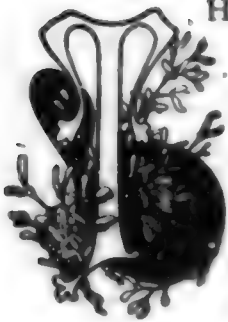


LITTLE RED RIDING - HOOD

Photo by H. C. Shelby

Jewellers' Tricks

BY AN AMATEUR



HE disease began at the age of three. It took the form of a chronic desire for the annexation of brass carpet rings. Happy childhood! The ring was yellow, and that was enough.

Ever since that time jewellery—rings especially—have had an absorbing interest for me. Between three-and-thirty a man should learn something of a subject that becomes an increasing hobby as he grows older. My education with regard to gems and goldsmiths' work has been chiefly gained from shop windows, a form of education of which most people do not realise the value.

The streets of London are a vast museum of treasures for those who care to look out for them. True, a great deal is sham, but it is an endless amusement and a byway of culture to hunt them down, and show them up—to oneself!

By hook or by crook, how, I hardly know, I have learned so much about my special mania that it has become a source of endless delight to me to show some sharp men of business, whose lives have been spent in selling gems, how little they understand the works of art that they deal with every day.

In London I have often been amazed at finding men in first-rate shops who do not know crystal from glass, or a "doublet" from a real stone.

Whether some subtle instinct is required to tell the difference, I do not know, but during the last few years I have met with extraordinary cases of ignorance on the part of professional jewellers.

Ordinary folks, the average man or woman, who buy jewels for gifts, or for

fashion's sake, are absolutely at the mercy of the jewellers, and their only protection is to go to a firm above suspicion. There are many shrewd sharks waiting for those whose pockets prohibit this precaution, for of course the firm "above suspicion" charges for its virtue, since virtue is always more costly than vice!

For my own part I feel certain that the shop windows, my chats with jewellers, and my constant study of the jewellery of everyone with whom I happen to be thrown into friendly contact, have made me shark-proof, save on one delicate point. I allude to pearls. I believe that my fear of being "done" over these very beautiful gems is shared by many professional merchants, if they would be honest enough to admit it. The imitations are so perfect, and in some of them so much real pearl is used, that nothing short of a destructive test would in many cases be certain proof of genuineness.

The sham diamond may be dismissed with a word. By daylight, and in the hand, the paste has not been made yet that has any resemblance to the real stone. At night, especially by candle light (the finest of all lights for jewels, by the way), they may escape detection if not seen too near, but never by daylight. For the most part the imitations are so contemptible that I marvel when ladies say to me: "Please buy a diamond ring for me. I am sure they would sell me an imitation if I did not go to a *very* well-known or expensive shop."

I think it is a little hard on "they," for I have never met with a case of a jeweller selling a sham for a real diamond. To do such a thing would, indeed, be a charming exhibition of childlike trust on his part. I do not, however, wish to run

down "paste." Much of the old paste and some of the modern (only a little, alas!) is exquisite and too little worn, and is spoken of, by women especially, slightly. This is unfair. I met a lady in Devonshire the other day who has the courage to wear at night a quantity of magnificent old paste. She told me that when she first lived there, everyone in the little town was raving about "Mrs. B.'s diamonds." She hastened to correct the error, and then the country dames rather "scoffed" at the ornaments. Surely a little hard, for they remained as they had been for a hundred years, beautiful in lustre and in design.

Some of the tricks resorted to by jewellers I can best point out by a few of my personal experiences.

One day I went into a great jeweller's, one of the largest in London, for some trifling purchase. In a case I saw a sapphire ring. There never was such a stone. It was more vividly blue than "Reckitt's" advertisement, it was blindingly blue!

"That is a very fine paste you have there," I said.

"Paste, sir?"

"Certainly."

"O, sir," the man groaned, "if I'd only known that. I gave £10 for it a few weeks ago. A swell gentleman came in, and wanted to get rid of it at a great sacrifice, and I bought it. It's a 'doublet.'"

"Really, it's uncommonly well done. May I look at it? O, not paste, I see, a 'doublet.'"

The moment I had it in my hand I could see how the unfortunate man had been "done." The thing on the surface had that indescribable cold look that a real stone always possesses.

And now a word as to "doublets." A "doublet" consists of, first, on the top a thin layer of the *real* stone, the thinner the better from the swindler's point of view, since stones are more costly than glass; underneath this is the imitation, flat on the top and cut like a real stone underneath. It can therefore be "set clear." Of course the glass is made to represent the most perfect colour of whatever stone it may be

imitating. Then the real and the sham are secured to each other by invisible cement and set. As a rule the slip of the real stone is a poor colour, and gets its depths of blue or crimson, or whatever it may be, from the glass beneath it. Holding one of these "doublets" sideways to the light the fraud may often be detected.

In the case of this particular "sapphire" I was shown the whole trick. The man was so disgusted at an obvious amateur like myself recognising the ring off-hand as a sham, that he took it to pieces and threw them over the floor. That was a pity, for it was a masterpiece of fraud. In a moment he had picked off the slip of sapphire, so thin that it was quite worthless, and laid bare the flat top of the glass; one push, and that was out too, and flipped away to a far corner of the shop.

I then left him with his own sad thoughts, and the handsome setting of the ring.

I discovered a very curious trick only a few days ago. I had been looking at several rings in the shop of a man with whom I had often dealt. A wonderful shop it is! Mr. X has a vast stock of modern and antique second-hand jewellery, and will often give a humble amateur very interesting information.

Amongst the rings was a fair-sized single stone emerald in a solid heavy setting—not claws. The colour was pale and the price £3. Even taking into consideration the bad colour, its cheapness roused my suspicions.

"Now, Mr. X," I said, "you don't mean to tell me that you would sell that stone at that price unless there was something very 'fishy' about it. A 'doublet,' perhaps," I added, against my better judgment.

"No sir, but——"

"Ah!"

"But that stone is made a better colour by being lighted from the sides of that solid setting, where the stone is let into the gold. It is done with all kinds of paint, and even with enamel sometimes, and the colour from the sides throws a light into the stone."

This was a revelation to me. I have,

MERIT AND MERIT ALONE.

In these days of keen business competition and brisk commercial enterprise, when the markets are flooded with various kinds of articles of food and drink, and when people are naturally desirous of getting the best value for their money, it is only reasonable to suppose that there will be a "survival of the fittest," and that only those products which possess sterling merit will long continue in public favour. Amongst these there is one which has won its way to the front by sheer merit, and merit alone, and that is Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa. This wonderful Food Beverage has become known even in the most remote districts, and as the knowledge of its excellence has increased, so also has the demand.

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of course, found foil of every imaginable colour used at the *back* of stones, but this emerald was "set clear," and on close observation I had no doubt that it was an emerald, though its family must have been heartily ashamed of it.

I have found numberless jewellers, especially in the country, who have a mania for stating that a stone is ruby, emerald, or sapphire, simply because they happen to be red, green, or blue. I believe in some cases this is honest ignorance, though in most a deliberate desire to cheat. A garnet or olmadine often has a fine colour, but always more purple in their redness than a ruby, yet I have many times had them offered to me as rubies. I suppose that they are not worth a quarter of the value of a ruby.

Of all stones probably the sapphire is the most easily imitated. There are a great number of shams sold as genuine stones. They feel like glass, and look like glass if people would only take the trouble to look at them in a good light, and to seek for the sharp, fine edges that are never obtained in modern paste, and that are the hall-mark of any well-cut gems.

An amusing incident in the shop of one of the best-known West End jewellers is amongst the most treasured experiences in my hobby history.

I wanted some little thing for a present, and I had gone to Mr. A.'s to rummage amongst his packets of odds and ends, awaiting their purgatory in the melting-pot. I also wanted to sell some old broken scraps of gold and silver. Amongst these were three small white crystal studs, hideous to look upon, with no lustre, and absolutely worthless.

The scraps were duly weighed and a price offered for them, which I accepted. I then said: "These valuable crystals I will bestow on you, Mr. A."

"Very kind of you, sir, but they are only paste."

"Quite sure, Mr. A.?"

Careful examination followed.

"Yes, quite sure."

"Did you ever know me call these kind of things by their wrong name?"

"Never before, sir, but you are mistaken this time."

"Do you mind fetching a file?"

"Not at all," said Mr. A., smiling pityingly.

"Now file them."

He did. He filed until "paste" would have been reduced to dust, but my silly little crystals remained unmoved.

We turned, laughing, to the bundles. Queer collections these! What joys, what headaches, all these poor battered odds and ends have caused or witnessed. Love-tokens, locketts once so dear, rings that told of a life's devotion, and others that, perhaps, had been returned when hearts grew cold; rings bought in memory of rich old people, because they willed it so, and knew that no one cared for them, and that they only cared the price of a ring for the person it was respectable not quite to forget.

Amongst the odd jumble was a little seal, very black, and with a sham stone set in rough claws, a thing of brass.

"A queer little gilt seal that."

"Gold," Mr. A. answered, firmly.

"Gilt, Mr. A."

"I am almost certain it is gold," he replied, doubtfully.

"Please fetch the acid."

The seal was tested.

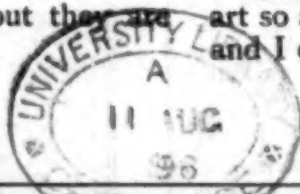
"I will give you this seal, sir."

"Thank you, Mr. A. Gold?"

"Gilt, sir. It is dirty, I will have it re-gilt."

"Rather a case of gilding refined gold from your point of view, isn't it, Mr. A.?" I was mean enough to say.

But I was half angry at finding another instance of stupid ignorance about an art so absorbing, from my point of view, and I ought to have been grateful.



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